

PLUCK AND LUCK

STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

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THE SWAMP DOCTOR; OR, THE MAN WITCH. *By ALLYN DRAPER* *AND OTHER STORIES*



The outlaws hurled themselves upon the Swamp Doctor and the Congo. Agor sprang to his feet and joined the rush. The table was overturned and although a hail of bullets fell from his revolvers the desperate robbers closed upon the Swamp Doctor.

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HAZLETON PA,

Radio! Radio! Read about it on pages 24 and 25

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THE SWAMP DOCTOR

OR, THE MAN WITCH

By ALLYN DRAPER

CHAPTER I.—The Man Witch of the Great Swamp.

In the fertile lowland country of one of the Gulf States, and in the immediate neighborhood of an extensive swamp which swept back to the north and west until it reached the Mississippi, was located the valuable plantation of the Bonvilles. The family were of ancient French origin, and they had always maintained their title to the proud claim of descendants of the titled refugees who had long ago sought a home in the colonies of the new world. At the time of our story the grand old family homestead, which had been constructed without regard to expense by a lavish and successful planter—old Gussipe Bonville—still retained its grandeur, and was by far the finest plantation mansion in the State. But the glory of the Bonvilles had departed, and a stranger—usurper, perhaps—reigned in their hereditary homestead. The race of Bonville was passing away. A terrible fatality had within a few years swept away Henri Bonville, Sr., and his eldest son, and this day upon which our story opens, the last of the race, Marcus, the younger son of Henri Bonville, lay dying by a slow, insidious and nameless malady which baffled medical skill, and for which the old physician from Chitta parish could find no specific in the whole of his materia medica.

The long, oppressively hot day was drawing to a close, the negroes were returning from their toil in the rice fields, and the refreshing evening breeze from the Gulf was beginning to make the sultry air bearable to the white occupants of the planter's mansion. A man of about forty or fifty years of age, tall and elegantly built, with dark complexion, flashing eyes like living fire, clear-cut features, but with a cruel, wolfish mouth and retreating chin, was pacing the length of the veranda, which extended the whole width of the front of the mansion. From the scowl upon his brow and the muttered curses which occasionally fell from his lips, it was evident that he was in no pleasant frame of mind.

"Curse the girl's insane whim; I dare not refuse her request for fear of exciting her suspicions, but for some reason which I cannot give even to myself I dread to admit the Swamp Doc-

tor to the chamber of Marcus Bonville. But the fellow is no doubt an ignorant half-breed with sufficient cunning to work upon the superstitious fears of the negroes, and so he has won among them the reputation of supernatural skill in the healing art. The slaves look upon him as a great Voodoo"—man witch, so called by the natives of Central Africa and the West Indies. "Certainly I have nothing to fear from him."

As he thus reflected a young girl stepped through one of the low windows upon the veranda. So strikingly lovely was she in every detail appertaining to female perfection that it was no wonder she was called "Beautiful Isadora" wherever the fame of her peerless beauty had penetrated. A bruntte formed for an artist's model, with a face to inspire the genius of the painter.

"You will send for the Swamp Doctor, then, this very night—now?" she said inquiringly.

"Yes, my dear, though I fear our dear Marcus is past all earthly help."

"Oh, do not say that, Captain Le Grand. If Marcus dies I do not care to live."

"Then you love him very dearly?"

"Better than my own life."

"You would make any sacrifice to save him?"

"Yes! Yes, I would willingly lay down my own life if by so doing I could save his."

"Dare I make her a proposition which trembles upon my lips?" thought Le Grand, as his flashing eyes devoured the girl's beauty. Then, aloud, he said:

"I doubt you not, Isadora, and many a man would give his life for your love. Happy Marcus! Death embraces him, but Isadora loves him. Ha, ha, ha!"

The girl gazed at the speaker wonderingly. She did not grasp the meaning of his ironical expression.

"Here, Sam, saddle Black Bess and ride down to the lone house on the bayou, and summon the Swamp Doctor to the mansion at once," said Le Grand, calling a negro who was passing toward the slave quarters.

"Yes, sah," and, doffing his tattered straw hat, the negro hurried toward the stables.

"Oh, thank you, Captain Le Grand. I feel a presentiment that the Swamp Doctor will save Marcus yet. They say he is a great botanical

student, and the negroes have implicit faith in him."

"I sincerely hope you may not be disappointed. Rest assured we shall all rejoice as much as yourself in Marcus' restoration," answered Le Grand, as Isadora entered the house. Scarcely had she vanished through the window when another personage appeared from behind a vine-covered arch at the end of the veranda. He was a little, dry, shriveled man, with a bald head and enormous mustache.

"So ze mam'selle love ze invalid, eh? Zat is anozer reason why ze malady can no be cure, eh? Ze boy would be a dangerous rival—so young, so handsome, eh?" said the little Frenchman, speaking with great volubility, and accompanying his remarks with profuse gesticulation.

"Curse it, Duditt. You come upon one at the most unexpected moments. You quite startled me. Yes, I infer from your remarks you have surmised the truth. I love Isadora, and Marcus Bonville was a dangerous rival. So, were there no estate to be won, the result must have been the same. I would sell my soul to possess that girl, and I will if it costs my life."

"Ha, ha, ha! Ze love of ze lion for ze lamb."

"You are a fool, Duditt. Cease your infernal apish nonsense or leave me. I am in no mood for it," and as he spoke Le Grand entered the house.

Captain Le Grand made his way directly to the room of the invalid. The apartment was shrouded in semi-gloom, and an aged negress sat beside the low bed upon which lay a young man just in the first bloom of manhood. Wonderfully handsome was the face which rested upon the snowy pillow that was little whiter than the invalid's pallid cheek. At the entrance of Le Grand the invalid's eyes opened, and a name was uttered by him. His voice was low, but Le Grand caught the familiar word—it was "Isadora."

Le Grand passed around to the head of the bed to a stand upon which stood numerous vials and glasses. The sick youth muttered some half inaudible sentence as he turned upon his pillow.

"Margy, you may go now," said Le Grand to the nurse. The aged negress arose and left the room, glad to be released for a moment from her patient and watchful care of the invalid. Le Grand was now alone in the room of the invalid. He cast a quick, searching glance about him, then poured some water into a goblet, and from a bottle he mixed the drug which the physician from Chita parish had left. When this was done, he paused a moment, and then once more assuring himself that he was unobserved, he drew a vial from his pocket, and from it dropped a portion of its contents into the goblet. At the same moment a hand clutched his arm. He turned and beheld a handsome, commanding woman of middle age.

"Madame Verges!" he exclaimed; then, with an oath, he seized her by the throat. As he did so a bright steel blade flashed before his eyes, and the woman brandished a two-edged dagger over his heart.

"Release me or die!" she hissed.

Slowly his hand relaxed its grasp. The woman was free. She retreated a few steps, and, standing in the door which opened out of the sick-room, with a significant gesture she signaled Le Grand

to follow as she passed out into the hall beyond. Mechanically the man obeyed. His face was white with fear. He feared this woman, for she now held another of his secrets, for this was by no means the first with which she had become familiar.

"So it is poison this time," said the woman whom he had called Madame Verges, as Le Grand reached her side.

"Yes, you know all now. It is poison!"

"I thought so from the first, but as you did not see fit to give me your confidence I determined to watch you. You need not look so murderous, your secret is safe, for are not our interests identical?"

"Yes! Yes! but you gave me such a surprise I knew not what I did."

"Let it pass. And now, what is this? Have you really summoned the Swamp Doctor to see Marcus?"

"Yes."

"And you take the terrible risk that he may discover your game, just to please the doll-faced girl who fancies she loves the sick youth. Look you, Maurice Le Grand, I have watched you closely, and I believe you are inclined to admire that girl; but I warn you—beware how you arouse my jealousy! No woman on earth shall come between us and live. You have promised, again and again, to acknowledge me before the world as your wife when the last of the Bonvilles was swept away and you had won your great life game. See that you keep that promise, or the vengeance of a wronged woman shall fall upon you! I swear it!"

"I will always be true to you, Corinne; you need have no fear," he answered, assuming a smile.

"Hark!" exclaimed the woman suddenly.

Both listened. There came a hollow groan from the sick-room, then all was still.

They at once re-entered the room of the invalid. Both had the same thought; both entertained the same wish—that they might find Marcus Bonville dead. They crossed the threshold; they stole silently toward the bed; eagerly they bent over the couch—a simultaneous and deep-drawn breath, and their eyes met.

"Yes," said Le Grand, answering his companion's mute inquiry. "Marcus is dead."

It was indeed so; the handsome youth lay rigid and still. Le Grand felt his heart; he could detect no beating. He took from a dressing table a hand-mirror and held it to the dead man's lips. No mist appeared upon it. The test said with its mute evidence that the man was dead. As Le Grand turned away exultantly there came the sound of a quick, firm tread upon the stairs leading up to the chamber of death. The guilty man started nervously. A wild impulse to fly seized upon him, but with an effort he restrained himself. Madame Verges shared his fear, but she seated herself calmly.

The footsteps reached the head of the stairs, and a moment later a tall form darkened the threshold. The Swamp Doctor stood before them. The conspirators gazed upon him curiously. Madame Verges started violently. Captain Le Grand shared her emotion. The same impression was made upon each—that they had seen the

man before. It would indeed seem that the Swamp Doctor was a man who once seen would not soon be forgotten. Tall, above the ordinary height of man, straight as an arrow, his presence was at once striking and commanding. Evidently he was not a European. Perhaps not a white man. His features were regular, but bold and prominent. His eyes large, dark and luminous. His hair, black as night, fell upon his shoulders straight and long as that of an American Indian. His complexion was a dark, ruddy, not unlike that of the Malay, and yet he could not be of that race, for he lacked the characteristic features. Was he an East Indian? No, that could not be, for he was not of the proper tint. His nationality would have puzzled the wisest to determine. Be he what he might, resolution and power were written up on every line of his stern yet noble countenance, and Le Grand and Madame Verges felt that they were looking upon no ordinary man, and intuitively they recognized in him a man of indomitable will, unyielding purpose, and dauntless courage. Intuitively, too, they fear him, and without knowing why they feel he is a foe. With one swift, sweeping glance the Swamp Doctor took in the entire scene to the minutest detail. Then, in a low but perfectly distinct and well-modulated voice, he said:

"I am the Swamp Doctor."

"Ah, yes. We had expected you, but you have come too late. The patient is dead," said Le Grand.

"Dead!" gasped the Swamp Doctor, with suppressed emotion, striding to the bedside. "Are you sure that he is dead?" and, with the last question, his voice became calm once more.

"Yes, poor boy—he is past all earthly aid; but satisfy yourself, doctor. Examine the body."

The Swamp Doctor was already doing so. A moment or more passed, then he turned away from the bedside.

"Are you satisfied?" asked Le Grand.

"Yes," answered the Swamp Doctor. "He is dead!"

He was bending over the stand upon which the medicine stood as he spoke, and seemed to be inhaling the faint fumes which came from the drugs. Suddenly he started violently, and gave vent to a stifled exclamation. Then turning, he said:

"My presence is not needed, so I will take my departure."

"Stay, sir, you have not received your fee," at the same time proffering money.

"You owe me nothing for my visit." The next moment he was gone from the room.

Madame Verges started to her feet and grasped Le Grand's arm nervously.

"I could swear that I have met that man before, but where or when I cannot tell."

As he went from the mansion the Swamp Doctor turned, and raising his clenched hand on high, he said in a voice of suppressed vehemence:

"Yes, Marcus Bonville is dead to the world, but he shall yet live to revenge himself upon the accursed inmates of this house! Cursed, thrice-cursed demons of infamy!"

What could be the meaning of his strange words? Was he insane, that he talked of restoring the dead to life? Scarcely had the Swamp

Doctor left the chamber of death when Isadora rushed into the room and with a wild wail of heartbroken sorrow, she fell fainting by the side of her dead lover. Heedless of her grief, Le Grand led Madame Verges from the room, and leaning from the balcony, which opened from the hall, he gazed upon the far-reaching acres of the vast plantation which swept around him, and said, with joyful exultation:

"At last all this vast wealth is mine. The last Bonville is swept from my path!"

CHAPTER II.—Thradradro, the East Indian Strangler.

With long, swinging strides, the Swamp Doctor made his way toward his home in the morass near the Bonville plantation. Dismal and dark was the chosen dwelling-place of this strange man in this great Southern swamp. The soil was wet and cold, and it furnished but niggardly sustenance for the stunted cane which here and there appeared. The sickly trees which grew out of the slimy pools of stagnant water were slowly dying. The vegetation, of a parasite nature, was, however, luxuriant in its growth, and twining among the trees, it served to render the gloomy fastness still more impenetrable, and added to the darkness by obscuring the light—shutting out the sun's rays as with a vast curtain of living growth. Deep bayous of dark, stagnant water, which set back from the Mississippi, abounded everywhere, and upon their mud-formed banks the huge alligators which inhabited them could be seen at almost any hour. The poisonous brown-spotted moccasin snake, the deadly-fanged cotton-mouth serpent, and the terrible man-eating alligators were the Swamp Doctor's neighbors.

Upon a wide bayou, which had a deep channel, and which connected directly with the river stood the habitation of the Swamp Physician—him whom the negroes termed "The Man Witch." His abode was known as "The Lone House on the Bayou." It was a low, square structure, dilapidated and neglected. Not unlike all else within the gloomy depths of the great morass, it seemed to partake of the general air of decay and death. As the recluse of the swamps approached his domicile, a huge bloodhound sprang to meet him, with every evidence of canine joy. The master caressed his dumb slave, and passing into the house, reached a small room, the furniture of which consisted only of two chairs and a deal table, which stood in the centre of the room. Seated upon one of these chairs, with his huge head resting upon the table, was a full-blooded Congo negro. He was sleeping soundly, and his snoring could only be compared to the rumbling of distant thunder.

The Swamp Doctor awoke him, and gave him some instructions, which from the time required to impart them, and the earnest and particular way in which the doctor strove to impress every point, must have been of greatest importance. When the instructions were all received, the negro, whom the Swamp Doctor called Goodman Sam, took his departure from the house. When the Congo was gone the Swamp Doctor seemed

seized with the spirit of unrest. Up and down the room he paced like a caged tiger, and ever and anon he cast an anxious glance at a small clock which stood upon the mantel.

"Yes, I will save the boy, and he shall live for revenge! Marcus Bonville is not dead, but he is the victim of a kind of catalepsy, which is complete insensibility, and which, in consequence of the complete failure of the heart action and of breathing, has many times been supposed to be death. When I examined the supposed dead youth I was myself deceived, and I thought him dead; but when I inhaled from among the medicines the smell of a certain East Indian drug, which is very little known to Europeans, and which possesses the power of producing catalepsy, when its use is long continued in small doses, I knew what had been done. Like a flash the truth dawned upon me, and I knew Marcus yet lived. Oh, fortunate was it for you, Cavan Le Grand, that I made the discovery, or you would yourself have been a dead man ere I had left that room. During my wanderings in India, where I spent several years, I became familiar with the toxicology of poisons of the country. From the native doctors I wormed the secrets of many a strange and fatal drug, and also of many a life-giving, death-combating remedial agent, which I have since used to alleviate the sufferings of humanity. Thanks to this knowledge, I know the antidote to the cataleptic poison. It was given me by the great medicine of the Fire-worshiper for saving the life of his son, Thradrado the Thug. Much more have I learned from Thradrado, who has been my friend and companion for many years. He should be here now, but I suppose he is in the alligator-room feeding his man-eating pets. I have not forgotten that there is a certain limitation to the lower of the antidote to the poison which I possess. If the victim remain in the cataleptic state for more than eight hours, then the antidote, which in all other cases always restores the suspended animation, becomes impotent and worthless, and the victim will surely die. Nothing on earth can in that case save him. I have dispatched Congo to the family vault, in which I doubt not the body of poor Marcus has even now been consigned, and he will bring the victim of the foul poisoner's plot here, that I may restore him.

"At three o'clock it will be eight hours since Marcus Bonville fell into the cataleptic state. There is plenty of time, and Goodman Sam has taken with him trusty assistants. Negroes who worship me as the great Voodoo, and obey me as they would a god—ah, little do the planters dream that one word from the Swamp Doctor would call together an army of savage Africans from the swamps, from the fields, from the run-away slaves' hiding-places, and hurl them upon them like an avalanche of death."

Thus mused the strange man of the swamp as he still continued his rapid pacing of the bare room. Suddenly the bloodhound gave vent to a low growl and advanced to the door.

"What is it, Dragon? Someone coming?"

The intelligent animal whined an assent. Directly the Swamp Doctor, who was listening intently, caught the sound of light footfalls. Dragon, the hound, wagged his tail in a friendly

manner, and walking to the back of the room, he stretched his powerful limbs and lay down, as if satisfied that there was nothing to fear in the party who was approaching.

"It must be a friend, from the conduct of the dog," said the doctor.

All surmise upon the subject was cut short, however, by the sound of a gentle tap upon the door.

"Come in!"

The door opened, and Isadora, "the beautiful," came timidly into the room. A blush suffused her cheek, for the pure-minded maiden felt that there was room for doubt regarding her coming thus late at night to the house of the swamp medicine man. The strange man hastened to place a chair.

"You are most welcome to my lone house. Coming thus, I presume you wish my aid in some way. If so, speak freely, and rest assured that I will serve you to the extent of my ability."

"I have come to you because I have heard of your skill. You were at my home to-day; you saw the young man who is dead at the Bonville mansion. Oh, sir, he was my promised husband, and I loved him better than I can tell! The slaves tell me that you possess power beyond that of mortals, and I have come to beg you, if such be the case, to bring my lover back to life, or tell me of some easy, painless way in which I can take my own life, and thus join him," said Isadora, and she fell upon her knees at the feet of the Voodoo.

Gently he raised her and seated her in a chair.

"Be calm, my dear young lady. Fear not. I hope to give you back your lover's life. No, do not thank me, but if you will repay me answer me a few questions which I wish to ask you of the past, and which you as a resident at the Bonville mansion must be familiar with. What became of the young wife of Marcus Bonville's elder brother after her husband was lost to her?"

"She mourned him long and bitterly, and she was very ill. Then, when she recovered, Captain Le Grand said she was insane, and she was confined in a room in a remote part of the mansion for a long time, and no one but a negro woman was permitted to see her. Then, after a time Le Grand and Duditt took her away one night in a closed carriage. I have never seen her since, but I have sometimes thought that all was not right. I have sometimes thought that she was the victim of foul play. She was so good, so beautiful, and as I saw her for the last time, with her pale, lovely but tearful face, as they drove away with her, I thought she looked more like an angel than an instant woman. Le Grand and Duditt were absent one whole day, and they returned alone, but they stated that they had placed Mrs. Bonville in a private insane asylum."

During Isadora's recital the Swamp Doctor became greatly excited, and as she concluded her statement he seemed overcome by his emotion, and staggered from the room out into the night. Isadora started in alarm to follow, but in a moment the Swamp Doctor re-entered the room, and outwardly, at least, he was perfectly calm. He seated himself again, as did Isadora. They both sat with their backs toward the rear of the room where the bloodhound lay. For two or three hours one of those fierce though short-lived South-

ern storms had been beating up, and now the rain began to fall in torrents, while the wind raved and shrieked about the lone house like demons at strife. The Swamp Doctor watched the clock. Slowly the hours were stealing on, but there was yet plenty of time for the Congo to come with the body of Marcus Bonville before the hour of three.

Suddenly Isadora sprang to her feet with a cry of terror. The Swamp Doctor turned quickly and half grasped a six-shooter from his belt, but as he saw the cause of the girl's fright he did not draw it. Standing by his side was a strange-looking man, perfectly naked with the exception of a waist-cloth of crimson silk, a native Hindu from India. His skin was a bright red brown, and his eyes, black as night, were piercing as a dagger. He was Thradradro the Thug, of whom the Swamp Doctor had spoken. How he had come into the room, and to their very side, without betraying his presence, was only to be accounted for by his native training. The Thugs, or stranglers, of India, are called the human serpents of the country for the silent and sly manner in which they make their way, where they will, to the side of a victim, far surpasses anything of the kind that can be attributed to any other race upon earth.

"Ah, Thradradro, so you have returned," said the doctor. Then to Isadora: "You have nothing to fear. This man is a friend of mine who came with me from India. He has not yet adopted our costume or manners, but he is harmless to my friends and his, though as fatal as the deadly upas tree to those who are our enemies. He is Thradradro, the prince of stranglers."

The Thug smiled at this laudatory speech. Isadora drew near the Swamp Doctor.

"Where were you when I came home?" asked the Swamp Doctor, after a moment of silence. "Feeding your alligators?"

"No," answered the Thug. "I have not fed them for many days, and they are as savage as the man-eating monsters of the Ganges, in my native land, which feed upon the children daily thrown them as an offering to our gods."

"Why do you starve them?" asked the doctor.

"To see them fight and kill each other."

"Thradradro, you are incorrigible. In some respects you are cruel and bloodthirsty. You could kneel upon the breast of an enemy while he slept, and with those muscular hands slowly compress his throat until he was dead, but as you would give your life for me I know you are capable of lasting gratitude, and I do not yet despair of weaning you from your heathenish ways."

The Thug smiled, but made no answer, as he turned away and lay down upon the floor near the bloodhound, which crawled to his side and licked his hand in the most friendly manner.

The storm raged so that Isadora could not depart, and resting her head upon the table, exhausted nature yielded, and she fell into a sweet sleep. With disturbing her, the Swamp Doctor drew near to the Thug, and in a low voice said:

"As I came home to-night I detected a man spying about the house, and if I mistake not he was Agor, the deformed, the leader of the river thieves. I believe he knows something of the

diamonds which we brought with us from India, and I suspect he and his band may yet seek to murder us in order to steal those priceless jewels."

The bad white man cannot murder Thradradro, for is he not the serpent of the jungle? Is he not the prince of the Thugs? See this dagger. The blade is poisoned; a scratch will kill," and as he spoke the thug flashed a tiny dagger from some place of concealment upon his person.

"Good, but keep a close watch, and if you see any strangers lurking about the swamp, follow them as closely as you would were you in a jungle of India upon the trail of a foe."

"Thradradro will be silent and sly as the swamp serpent," was the answer.

The storm had abated by this time, and Isadora, who had awakened, insisted upon returning home at once. The doctor advised her to wait until morning, as he could not leave the house to escort her home, for he must be there the moment the Congo returned. Marcus' life depended upon that. But Isadora laughed at the idea of danger, and said she had no fear of molestation. Then the medicine man offered to send Thradradro to escort her, but Isadora declined. She felt afraid of the thug, and she would not have gone through the swamp with him for all the wealth of the world. Thus it was that Isadora went from the house of the Swamp Doctor alone. As she was about to depart, and as the strange man whose guest she had been stood with her at the door, she placed her hand thrustingly in his, and looking up earnestly into his stern face, which softened as he met her glance, she said:

"You are not what you seem. Will you not tell me who or what you are?"

"I am Varcodoc, the Swamp Doctor; Varcodoc, the Voodoo; Varcodoc, the Man Witch; Varcodoc, the Hermit—as you will—a recluse, with some knowledge of herbs and native drugs; that is all, my child."

She gave him both her hands for a moment impulsively. He pressed them warmly, and the next moment she was gone. It was a quarter past two o'clock; but forty-five minutes yet remained to three, and after that nothing could save Marcus Bonville. The Swamp Doctor was growing wild with suspense and fear. He could scarcely restrain himself from dashing forth into the night to seek Marcus himself. But he reflected that such a proceeding would be utter folly, and he forced himself to remain inactive. The Thug noticed his uneasiness, and asked the reason. Hurriedly he told him all.

In turning to answer the Thug's question, the Swamp Doctor brought his back toward the front of the room, in which was a window and a single door. As he again confronted the window he caught a glimpse of a face pressed against the glass. At the same moment there was a hissing sound from the Thug, and like a ball fired from a cannon the huge bloodhound shot through the air with a terrific bound, and went crashing through the window. Almost at the same moment the wild, despairing cry of a woman in distress came to their ears, borne upon the night wind from the swamp.

"I go, you cannot," said Thradradro, and swift

as an arrow, and as silent, the strangler of India glided out into the night.

"It was the voice of Isadora," muttered the Swamp Doctor.

CHAPTER III.—The Dead Man's Story.

But a few moments elapsed after the departure of Thradrado the Thug, and Dragon the bloodhound, when there came to the ears of the Swamp Doctor the sound of tramping feet, and soon the door of the house opened, and Goodman Sam, the Congo, accompanied by three other negroes, entered, bearing between them the body of a man—of Marcus Bonville.

"At last you have come, and thank Heaven there is yet time; but not a moment is to be lost. This way; bring him into the medicine-room," and as he spoke the Swamp Doctor threw open a door at the side of the room and passed through it, followed by the sable bearers of the dead man.

The apartment in which they now were was a strange one, and was the reception-room in which the Voodoo received the patients who visited his lone house for advice and treatment. It was a large room, gorgeously furnished in Oriental magnificence; Turkey carpets of fabulous wealth covered the floor. Wonderful Persian divans, silk-embroidered chairs, tables inlaid with rare mosaic, and priceless articles of "vertu" were scattered about in picturesque confusion. The walls were covered with silk, and upon a pedestal upon one side of the room stood a perfectly articulated human skeleton. On each side of this were cages in which were confined a number of strange East Indian serpents. In the center of the room stood a table, and upon this the body of Marcus Bonville was placed, while the negroes, awed by the surroundings, stood tremblingly watching every movement of the man witch. The wind, since the cessation of the rainfall, had arisen to a gale, and it moaned and shrieked through the swamp, sounding to the superstitious negroes like the death-wail of some human creature. A single lamp upon a bracket illuminated the "medicine-room," as the Swamp Doctor termed this apartment, and it was a strange nocturnal scene which the whole formed.

The Swamp Doctor lost not a moment in beginning the work of restoration. From a sideboard he took a vial filled with some coloreless liquid, and producing a small hypodermic syringe he drove the sharp needle-like point into the neck of the seemingly dead man, and injected the contents in some way directly into the circulation. This done, he placed the head of the dead man lower than the rest of his body, so that the blood would find no difficulty in reaching the brain when it should begin to circulate again. Then, with anxiety which was terrible, the Swamp Doctor stepped back and awaited the result of his treatment. The antidote, which he had administered had never been known to fail, so there was no reason to expect that it would do so now, and yet the strange interest which he felt in Marcus Bonville rendered the Swamp Doctor extremely nervous. It was remarkable that the strange man should take such a deep interest in

such an utter stranger as Marcus Bonville was to him. Why did he do so?

No one could have answered that question save Varcodoc himself. It was a mysterious act, but no more mysterious than was the man himself, for who or what the man-witch of the swamps was was a deep mystery itself. That is—were he, indeed, other than what he seemed, as Isadora had, with female intuition, suspected.

Several moments passed, and still the dead man gave no sign of returning consciousness—five, eight, ten minutes of breathless suspense for the Swamp Doctor. He was beginning to despair. He began to believe that the antidote had failed. He thought that the victim of the cataleptic poison was indeed dead past his skill to restore to life when suddenly a slight shiver shook the frame of the poisoned man, and the muscles of the limbs twitched convulsively.

"Saved! saved!" cried the Swamp Doctor in delight. "The antidote is working." It was so, the muscular excitations were the premonitory symptoms of returning consciousness, and the re-establishment of the heart's functions. A moment or more elapsed when a deep groan came from the patient, his eyes opened, and then a moment later he sat up, and gazed about him with a frightened, wondering look. It would seem that he had risen from the dead. The negroes fell upon their knees in terror. In their eyes the Swamp Doctor was indeed a god—holding the keys of life and death.

"Be not alarmed, you are among friends," said Varcodoc, taking the hand of Marcus and pressing it in a friendly way.

"Where am I? How came I here?" demanded the restored one.

Rapidly and clearly the Swamp Doctor told him all.

"So I have been the victim of that villain Le Grand, who has brought a curse upon my family and ruined it. I now believe that he caused the death of my father and my only brother, and that my death was to be the final move in his game of death," said Marcus, at the conclusion of the Swamp Doctor's recital.

"I doubt not your surmise is correct, my young friend; but now tell me your story, and if you have been the victim of the cruel wrongs at which you hint, perhaps I may be able to aid you in righting them, for I have taken a strange fancy to you, and I hate Captain Le Grand."

"You should know all," answered Marcus Bonville, and when he had descended from the table and seated himself in an armchair, and was about to begin his story, the Swamp Doctor said:

"First drink this stimulating cordial. It will strengthen your nervous system, and refresh you generally. After passing through what you have you need a strong nerve tonic," and he gave Marcus a wine glass filled with a purple fluid. The youth drank it unhesitatingly. It seemed to act instantaneously, giving him new life and vigor.

"You may retire with your friends, Sam," said the Swamp Doctor to the Congo. "You will find refreshments upon a sideboard in the outer room, and to-morrow I will reward you all for this night's work."

The Congo bowed, and, followed by his sable brethren, he left the room.

"Now for your story," said Varcodoc as the door closed upon them.

"To begin at which I now believe to be the commencement of the plot against our family I must go back five years. At that time my father was a most prosperous planter, and the owner of the entire river-bottom known as Bonville plantation. My mother had died many years previous when I was a babe, and our family was then reduced to three persons—my father, my brother Ricard, and myself. My brother Ricard had married a beautiful though friendless orphan girl a year previous to the time at which I begin my history, and at the expiration of that year my brother set out upon a voyage to a foreign country in the interest of the firm of dealers in precious stones by whom he had long been employed, and whose place of business was located in New Orleans.

"The mission upon which he went was kept secret, but I have reason to think it was one of vital importance. At the same time that my brother left us he gave his young wife into my father's care, and she came to reside at the plantation. I was attending a Northern college, and the increasing business of my father's vast estate necessitated his employing a man to act as his assistant in its management. Then it was that he engaged Le Grand, whose acquaintance he had made in New Orleans some time before. From the day that man first set foot upon our plantation, the evil work began. My father was a gambler, and this man cunningly led him on and on, by slow degrees, until during the next three years my father had lost to him a large share of our estate. Then Le Grand began to show his true character, and I now suspect that, with the aid of his friend Duditt, my poor father was murdered, for he disappeared mysteriously, and as there was found some time after in a bayou a body which resembled him, the general conclusion was that, driven to desperation by his losses, he had in a moment of despair committed suicide, and that the body found was that of my father.

"But if that body was my father's I believe he was murdered. I was at once summoned home, and the very same week that I reached home my brother Ricard arrived in New Orleans, having returned from the foreign lands in which he had been for five years. Upon learning the news of my father's death, he did not wait even to make his report to his firm, but started post-haste for our family homestead, for he was anxious to see the wife he had left so long, as well as to investigate my father's death. But my brother never reached Bonville plantation; like my father, he mysteriously disappeared; but no trace of his body was ever found. It then came out that he had in his possession some valuable jewels, and the theory was that someone had learned of this fact, and that he had been murdered by the river thieves, whom, as you may know, still infest these swamps.

"The death of her beloved husband fell with crushing force upon my brother's wife, and she fell ill. I had examined into my father's affairs, and to my surprise I found that he had died a beggar. Everything he possessed had become the property of Le Grand, and so cunningly

had the villain planned, and so skillfully had he worked out his schemes, that he had obtained my father's signature to all the papers necessary to the maintenance of his claims upon our family estate. I was penniless, and therefore helpless, but my suspicions were aroused, and although I was many times sorely tempted to shoot the villain down I concealed my suspicious, determined to watch the arch-rascal, hoping to discover something which might give me a clue to work upon, and so lead to bring him to justice. About this time the woman called Madame Verges appeared at the homestead, and with her came Isadora.

"From the moment I saw her I loved the beautiful Isadora, but I always doubted and disliked Madame Verges, whom I believe to be nothing more nor less than Le Grand's mistress, whom he had summoned from France. Who Isadora is I know not, and the dear girl is ignorant of her parentage; but she is not the daughter of Madame Verges, as the woman claims—of that I am assured. A few weeks after Madame Verges's arrival, the strange malady with which I am supposed to have died seized me, and until this hour I have been a helpless invalid, powerless in the hands of my foes. During this time they have sent my brother's wife away, claiming that she was insane, which I know to be a base lie.

"This is my story, and now that you have restored me to life I shall let them still think me dead, while I work for revenge. A terrible retribution shall yet fall upon my foes. I will bitterly avenge the murder of my father and my beloved brother, and also the wrongs of the pure and noble woman who was my brother's wife."

"Nobly spoken, my young friend, nobly spoken. The spirit of the ancient Bonville lives again in you. I will aid you in your work of vengeance, for I also have a terrible settlement to make with Le Grand and his accomplices, for a private injury no less grave than that which they have brought upon you. Look upon me as one you can trust, for I will be to you as true as the brother whom you have lost."

As he spoke the Swamp Doctor grasped the hand of Marcus Bonville, and as those two men clasped hands a lasting league of hate was formed against their foes.

"The wretch Duditt dared to persecute my brother's wife with his insulting attentions, and ever since her disappearance I have been haunted by the fear that she has been betrayed into his power. If I could only solve the mystery of her fate, I shall rest easier, and to that object I shall first turn my attention," said Marcus.

"Curse the wretch! He shall die by my hand!" exclaimed the Swamp Doctor, springing to his feet as though mad with rage.

Marcus regarded him wonderingly.

"Then you have cause to hate Duditt?" he said.

"Yes," answered the Swamp Doctor, briefly.

"And now," continued Marcus, "I want your advice upon another matter of vital importance to me. Isadora returns my love, and I would make her my wife, but before I was poisoned Madame Verges forbade her to receive my attentions, and I know that Le Grand has evil designs against the pure young girl, though for fear of arousing the jealousy of Madame Verges

he strives to conceal his admiration of her. I dare not leave Isadora in his power. What would you do?"

"Take her from that house, make her your wife, and kill the man who dared to come between us afterward. This is what I would do, Marcus Bonville, were I in your position," answered the Swamp Doctor with true Southern fire and spirit.

"I will do so," answered Marcus warmly.

As he spoke a strong gust of wind swept against the house with terrific force, a vivid flash of lightning occurred, and one of the long, low windows was blown open, blind and sash. The single lamp in the "medicine-room" was extinguished, and all was for the time total darkness. But a moment later another flash of lightning followed, and by its momentary light both Marcus and the Swamp Doctor saw the white-robed figure of a woman standing at the open window.

"Fly! Fly! Marcus Bonville, your enemies are at hand!" she shrieked.

The next instant darkness inclosed her, and a moment later, when another flash came, she had vanished. The sound of horses' hoofs, shout and yells of a party of mounted men broke upon the ears of the two men in the medicine-room. The phantom woman of the swamps had not given a false warning. Marcus bounded to his feet. "I know not whether they seek me or not, but I must not be found here. Which way can I escape?" he asked.

"This way," answered the Swamp Doctor, rushing into the outer room and tearing open a trap-door in the floor. "Quick, down with you; the alligator room is below, but the passage to the bayou is open, and Thradrado's man-eaters are not at liberty."

As he spoke he pushed Marcus down the trap, from which steps led to the room underneath, and hastily closed the door. Again there came the shouts of the horsemen.

"It is Agor, the deformed, and his band of river cut-throats. I do not believe they sought Marcus. I believe they want me and my diamonds. I wish Thradrado and the bloodhound were here," said the Swamp Doctor.

All the negroes, with the exception of Goodman Sam, the Congo, had departed. Therefore, if resistance was to be made they were the only two to make it. Sam had already seized a long rifle which hung over the mantel, and stood ready to shoot down the first man that should darken the door. The Swamp Doctor coolly took from a drawer a pair of revolvers, and having satisfied himself that they were all ready for use, he placed them upon the table in the center of the room, and behind it he took his station. The approaching band drew nearer, and from their yells Varcodoc knew that his house was surrounded. The next moment the door was dashed open, and five as villainous-looking personages as ever trod the earth swarmed into the room. The band consisted of seven men, but two had been left upon guard without. They were armed to the teeth, and their leader, a hump-backed, bow-legged, and extraordinarily ugly cut-throat, sprang in front of the table, behind which sat the Swamp Doctor, and cocking

a pair of Colt's No. 6 forty-five calibre pistols in his face, he yelled:

"Throw up yer hands or you are a dead man!"

The Swamp Doctor's hands rested upon the table, and in obedience to the command of the deformed rascal up came his hands, but in each one was a Remington improved six-shooter at full cock. As the Swamp Doctor's hands arose to the level of the desperado's breast, they came to a stop, and thus, like a pair of duelists awaiting the word to fire, stood the two men, whose weapons covered each other's hearts.

CHAPTER IV.—Isadora's Peril.

Although she had made light of the danger of returning alone to the Bonville plantation from the lone house upon the bayou where she found herself out in the darkness of the swamp, brave as Isadora naturally was, a nameless sense of impending danger stole upon her—a fear vague and undefined oppressed her; and she quickened her pace along the gloomy pathway which she was traversing. Perhaps two-thirds of the distance which intervened between the home of the Swamp Doctor and the plantation had been traversed in safety, and exhausted by her rapid journeying, the weary girl had fallen into a rapid walk, when directly in her path appeared three human forms. So sudden was their coming that it seemed as though they had sprung up out of the earth.

For an instant fright rendered her motionless. Had life depended upon it at that instant the girl could not have moved, but as the figures in front moved toward her she turned and started to fly back toward the abode of Varcodoc, the Swamp Doctor. Scarcely had she retraced her way a dozen paces when there in the rear, directly in the path which she must traverse, appeared six more men. With a long, loud, and wildly despairing cry of terror, the entrapped maiden sank to the earth overcome by the peril of the situation. The men who had thus waylaid her advanced upon her from both ways, and as their leader sprang forward and seized her, Isadora fainted dead away. The parties into whose hands she had thus fallen were none other than the band of "Agor, the deformed," the swamp outlaw.

"Here, Cale and Samuels, you two take the gal to the crib, and the rest of us will push on to the lone house on the bayou and do the work there," said Agor, giving the maiden into the hands of two members of the band, who at once turned aside, and following a trail that was invisible to those not versed in the lore of the swamp and forest, they soon disappeared in the undergrowth, while Agor and the remaining seven of his band continued on toward the home of the Swamp Doctor where they arrived as we have seen. The place called the crib, to which Agor had directed the captors of Isadora, was the retreat of the band, and it was hidden deep in the most dangerous and impenetrable portion of the swamp. When Isadora returned to consciousness she found herself a prisoner in a small room within this swamp fortress. With the first return of her senses,

the captive sprang to her feet and gazed wildly around. She was alone, but directly the door opened and an aged negress, of most repulsive appearance, entered.

"Where am I? Oh, let me go to my home! Save me, and Heaven will reward you," implored Isadora, addressing the sable hag.

"No use to take on, honey. You is not agoin' to be hurt, not if you isn't a great fool."

"Who are you, woman?"

"I'se called Hista."

"But you are a woman. Oh, have you no feeling for a sister woman in distress? I am a helpless maiden in the power of these human fiends."

"See here, child, you are a white gal, and I hate the whole white race; but the great Voodoo of the swamps told me that a white maiden would come to me in the storm and in the night, and that she would bring me good fortune. He said treat her kindly. If I thought you were the maiden—"

"I am! I am! The Swamp Doctor is my friend. I was returning from his house when I was captured by the swamp outlaws who brought me here."

"Then, though I cannot save you, honey, I will give you my dagger, and you can use it if you must; but don't be a blame fool."

And concluding thus with her favorite expression, Hista, the negress, drew a dagger from her bosom and handed it to Isadora, and with this the hag left the room. Isadora, thus left alone, threw herself upon the couch, and again gave way to the terrible despair that was upon her. Suddenly, in a low but distinct and cautious voice, she heard her own name pronounced.

"Who speaks?" asked Isadora, drawing near to the side of the wall.

"A friend. When your captors come, and make known their foul purpose, strive to gain time, for a friend is upon your trail, and if you can hold your enemies from the accomplishment of their purpose until he arrives you may yet be saved. Farewell!"

Isadora heard a faint sound from without as the door closed away from the cabin. Could she have seen through the walls of the room, the captive would have seen sliding away the same white-robed woman who had brought to the Swamp Doctor the warning of the coming of the swamp outlaws to his lone house upon the bayou.

Hour after hour passed, and the night was over. The whole of the following day wore away, and night came again. It was yet early evening when the door of Isadora's prison opened, and Agor, the deformed, and a tall man whose face was completely concealed by his beard and a black hood, had drawn well down over his eyes. At sight of the newcomers Isadora, who had been reclining upon the couch, sprang to her feet, and retreated to the farther end of the room.

"You can go now, Agor," said the bearded man, nodding to the door.

"All right," and the outlaw leader passed from the room, leaving his companion alone with Isadora.

"At last, my great beauty, you are in my power. I swore to make you mine, and you shall not leave this room until you yield to my will.

If you are kind to me you shall be treated well, but if not, I will find a way to break your proud spirit, and force you to yield to my desire," said the stranger, advancing toward the shrinking, trembling captive.

"Stand back!" she cried. "You are to me a stranger, whom I have never seen before. This must be some cruel mistake. I cannot be the person whom you think. Oh, I implore you, release me and permit me to return to my home."

"Ha, ha, ha! Then you have not penetrated my disguise. Behold! Do you know me now, my dear?" and the man threw off the slouch hat and false beard, thus revealing his true identity.

"Great heavens! It is Captain Le Grand!" exclaimed Isadora, and she reeled back against the wall, stunned by the discovery, which was a complete surprise.

"I will give you till midnight to think over my proposition," and with that Le Grand left the cabin.

Only a few short hours' respite was granted to the imperiled girl. Where was the friend whom the phantom lady had said was upon the trail? Where was Thradradro, the Thug, who had started forth to rescue her? Where was Dragon, the bloodhound, that with keen scent could follow the trail where human skill would be at fault. An hour or more passed; the faint spark of hope which she had entertained of rescue was dying in Isadora's breast. Suddenly a strange sound reached her ears. It was as of some one digging in the earth at the outside of the log room. She was not long kept in that agony of suspense. Soon the earth was torn away, and, to her surprise, through the opening thus formed appeared the head of a bloodhound. It was the head of Dragon, the Swamp Doctor's noble dog.

In another moment the hound dragged himself through the narrow opening, and, with a whine of joy, he flung about the neck of Isadora that help must be near at hand. If she could only send by the faithful dog a message telling where she was, she thought; then, taking a piece of blank paper, which she chanced to have about her, she, with a pencil, hurriedly wrote a few lines explaining her situation. Then the next question was how to send it? How to secure it upon the dog? Her eyes fell upon the band of leather secured by a buckle about the animal's neck. Then the difficulty was solved. Hastily, but securely, she fastened the note to the dog's collar, and then, leading the intelligent canine to the opening, she signaled him to go. "Take my letter to your master," she said. As though he comprehended the spoken words, Dragon crept through the opening and disappeared. But it would seem that the message to the dog's collar was to avail her nought, for midnight came and still no one came to her aid. Promptly at that hour Le Grand entered the room.

"I have come for your answer," he said.

"And you shall have it. I will never yield to your wishes. I will die first," answered the noble girl.

"Then, by heavens, you shall have the lash, as I promised you!" cried Le Grand, and with an oath he strode from the room.

Hardly was he gone when the door was again cautiously opened, and Madame Vague glided

into the room. At sight of Isadora her eyes flashed with rage, and she seemed to be about to spring upon the poor girl.

"So you whom I have been a mother to, you, who owe your very life to me, you like a serpent turn and sting the hand that feeds it. You have dared to take him from me. You! you doll-faced devil! You have stolen from me the love of Maurice Le Grand. Oh, I will spoil that pretty face; I'll tear your big black eyes from your head, you ungrateful hussy you," and the enraged woman, turning upon Isadora, seemed about to make good her threat.

"Stop, woman! You wrong me. I hate Captain Le Grand! I am an unwilling tenant of this place—a prisoner; and if you would stop to think your own good sense would tell you that I speak the truth, for do you not remember how I loved poor Marcus Bonville?"

Madame Verges had been for the moment passion-blind, but she now saw that Isadora spoke the truth—the poor girl's terror was too real to be assumed—too awfully realistic for acting. Intuitively Madame Verges, who was a woman of the world, saw that Captain Le Grand's whole plot, and she determined to thwart him if it were possible. At that moment Le Grand and the half-naked negro, with the whip in his hand, entered the room. Le Grand's eyes fell upon Madame Verges, and he started back in astonishment.

"Woman, why are you here?" he exclaimed.

"To thwart your villainy!" she answered.

Le Grand's face grew livid with rage.

"We shall see who is master here," he said, and he gave vent to a peculiar cry. In a moment a dozen of the swamp outlaws appeared at the door.

"Remove that woman," ordered Le Grand, indicating Madame Verges.

The men rushed upon her, and despite her resistance she was hurried from the room.

"Strip that girl and give her fifty lashes, Ark," commanded Le Grand.

The men began to move toward to execute the order. Isadora thought that the moment for self-defense had come, and drawing the dagger which she had received from Hester, the day before, she was about to bury it in her opponent's heart, when, glancing beyond Le Grand, who stood with his back to the door, she saw it not closed, and behind Thradadro, the stranger, gliding silently in, crouching low upon the ground like a serpent. In his teeth gleamed a long, glittering knife, and a coil of stout cord was coiled in his right hand, which rested upon his hip.

At the same moment Dragon, the bloodhound, came into the room. The dog tackled Ark and bore him to the floor unconscious, while Thradadro threw himself upon Le Grand and soon had him by the throat and nearly strangled him. Just then a stranger entered, and when Thradadro turned his head to see who had entered Le Grand drew a revolver and was about to fire when the stranger stepped forward and fired him with the butt of his revolver. Voices were now heard outside and soon a knocking on the door was heard. One of the men realized it was Agor and his band. The stranger pointed to the hole the dog had dug through the back of the cabin and then turned to crawl to safety while he held the door against the villains. Thradadro and Isadora ran as they

were bidden and had just got outside when the villains broke into the room. As they did so the tall stranger pulled something like a ball from his pocket and threw it against the wall. It exploded with a loud report, filling the cabin with a dense smoke. When the smoke cleared away Agor was lying on the floor, three of his band dead, while the figures of Le Grand and Ark lay in a corner of the room. The stranger had disappeared.

It did not take long for Agor and the rest of his band to find out how the maiden and Thradadro had escaped, and the leader directed his band to set out upon their trail. After a while a shout was heard from the outlaws. Could it be that the fugitives had been discovered? Let us see in the next chapter how the outlaws had escaped from the alligators in the Swamp Doctor's cellar, which occurred in Chapter V.

CHAPTER V.—The Alligator Room.

When the Swamp Doctor closed the door upon Marcus, after the latter had passed down the stairs which led directly downward, the youth found himself in a wide and peculiarly constructed cellar, one side of which connected with the bayou by means of a narrow opening excavated through the clay bank just at water level. There was nothing to prevent him from making his escape from the cellar, for a boat lay at the mouth of the opening of the bayou, and he had only to enter it and row down the channel to the river to make good his secret flight from the place; and yet it seemed to Marcus cowardly and ungrateful to thus desert his benefactor in the hour of peril.

At nearly the same time the sound of the arrival of the band of outlaws, headed by Agor, the deformed, came to his ears, and but a brief space of time elapsed when he heard the sharp, whip-like crack of a rifle in the room above. Obeying an impulse which was not prompted by fear, but by good judgment, Marcus sprang into the boat at the mouth of the opening and pushed out into the darkness upon the waters of the bayou. He had determined to seek assistance for the Swamp Doctor among some friends whom he could trust with his secret of life. Onward up the bayou rowed Marcus as swiftly as his strength would permit, but he soon exhausted the strength which the excitement of the moment had given him, and he was obliged to lay down the oars and permit the boat to drift as it would.

Suddenly the dead silence of the swamp was broken by a human voice giving vent to a despairing cry for help. It came from the depths of the swamp, but it reached the ears of Marcus, and somewhat refreshed by his rest from the exertion of rowing, he pulled his boat to the shore, and landing, began to pick his way carefully through the swamp in the direction of the voice. Soon he arrived at the edge of a flat of swampy mire, as treacherous and fatal as a quicksand, of which it is a species, and here, almost, turned nearly to the right in its dark bottom, he saw a man. In a strange, broken, guttural, compound of English and some foreign tongue, the man shouted his aid, and then Marcus recognized him

as a man whom he had seen with the Swamp Doctor some weeks before when he had chanced to meet him in the forest.

"Who are you?"

"I am Thradradro, the servant of the Swamp Doctor," was the answer. It was indeed the East Indian. When he had rushed from the lone house on the bay, upon hearing Isadora's cry of distress immediately after the bloodhound, as has been narrated, he hurried in the direction from whence the sound came, naturally taking the trail by which Isadora would return homeward, but in the darkness of the night he strayed from the trail and stumbled into the swamp mire in which Marcus found him. This was the reason why he had not come to Isadora's rescue. A fatality of misfortune had also prevented Dragon, the bloodhound, from reaching Isadora before her captors had conveyed her to their secret haunt in the swamp.

Once assured by Thradradro's statement that he was not an enemy, Marcus bethought him of the fact that the nearest friend upon whom he could depend was one "Old Bob," an old negro cook-hunter, who had a cabin in the swamp. To this end Marcus now made his way, first a further Thradradro that he would soon return. He was true to his word, and accompanied by the old darky, cook-hunter, Marcus soon reappeared before the rejoiced prisoner in the mire, and their united efforts extricated the East Indian. Hardly had he cleared the quagmire, when the bay of a bloodhound sounded near at hand, and the next moment Dragon was at Thradradro's side, frisking about and manifesting every sign of delight. Having thus rescued the East Indian, who was earnest in his thanks, Marcus returned with old Bob to his hut, to seek the repose and food of which he felt himself in urgent need. Left with the dog in the swamp, the Thug found the note in the dog's collar. He then started to return to the Swamp Doctor's house.

When Marcus left Old Bob's cabin he was accosted by the phantom woman of the swamps, who ordered him to follow her if he would rescue his brother's wife from an asylum. Marcus did as he suggested and she led him to a gloomy building and then fled into the darkness. Marcus encountered the darky watchman of the asylum and by pulling his pants gained admittance to the building without being suspected. He soon explored the rooms and finally entered one in which was Helen Beville. She recognized him at once and springing into his arms. He told her he had come to save her and in a short time he was leading her place with Helen when all they were about to descend the stairs the mad doctor's assistant, Florist, rushed from the office, yelling: "Stop him, boys!"

Marcus then ran away around Helen, saying: "Come! I am going down these stairs."

As Marcus entered the room, half a dozen men rushed up the stairs, and he and Helen were separated and locked up in separate cells in the asylum.

In the meantime strange events had transpired at the Swamp Doctor's house. The dramatic scene which the Swamp Doctor, the Thug, and Agor, the

deformed, who also covered him with like weapons, while Goodman Sam, the Congo, with the rifle at his shoulder, drew a bead upon the four outlaws behind their leader, as we have described, could not last long. Action stirring and deadly must inevitably follow at once. The next moment the outlaws hurled themselves upon the Swamp Doctor and the Congo. The table was overturned, and although a hail of bullets fell from his revolvers, the desperate robbers closed upon the Swamp Doctor and bore him to the floor. Congo Sam had clubbed his rifle and did good work, but the robbers were reinforced by the guards from without, and the brave negro fell at last, stricken down by a crushing blow from behind. The conflict had been short and decisive. Victory rested with the band of Agor.

"Now," said Agor, addressing the Swamp Doctor, who was held by two of the band, "produce your dimings or you die!" and as he spoke he thrust the muzzle of his revolver into Varcodoc's face.

"Very well; I am in your power, and I must yield. The jewels are in the cellar, secreted so that only myself can find them. Permit me to descend and I will get them."

"All right, only we will go with you. Lead the way."

The Swamp Doctor drew up the trap-door, and as he raised it a smile of satisfaction appeared upon his face. Down the steps proceeded Varcodoc, attended by the outlaws, and soon the entire party stood in the cellar. The next moment there was a creaking sound, and the entire partition, which we described at the opening of the chapter, swung upward, and a wave of slime and water came pouring into the cellar, and with it came a score of huge alligators. Thradradro's man-eaters were free now. At the same moment the opening into the bayou was closed by the fall from above of an iron plate, which descended along grooves upon each side of the opening, and fitted it perfectly. Also, as if caused by the same secret power, the stairs by which they had descended into the cellar fell with a crash. The Swamp Doctor had, by simply depressing a lever in the wall, caused all these wonderful changes. With distended jaws the terrible man-eating alligators were rushing into the cellar. The outlaws saw that they had fallen into an awful death-trap. But what of the Swamp Doctor? Had he not sacrificed his own life with that of the outlaws?

No. The doctor pressed a spring which opened a hidden door in the cellar wall and leaped out, but not before Agor had followed close behind him, leaving his companions to the tender mercies of the alligators. Agor fled to his secret haunt, while the doctor entered his hut and restored Goodman Sam to his senses. The doctor disengaging himself then went in search of Thradradro, and it was he who appeared as the stranger in the hut and was the means of the faithful black's and Isadora's release from captivity. Upon firing the bomb in the hut he dashed out on the trail of our friends whom he soon came across, just before Agor's band came across them. The doctor suddenly thought of a method by which he and our friends passed on for a considerable time. He took a quantity of gunpowder, Thradradro and Isadora packed off, the doctor drawing a

self with a latchkey, he passed directly upstairs and entered an elegantly furnished room at the rear of the house. The establishment was a fashionable boarding-house. A half hour later he was sleeping soundly upon the bed upon which he had thrown himself still in full dress.

Hardly had the man of diamonds quitted the room when Le Grand passed into the main room, and signaling a couple of flashy-looking men who were loafing about the tables, he hurriedly drew them aside and whispered some communication in their ears. A moment later they left the room and glided out into the street. Silently as shadows they followed the man of diamonds until they saw him enter his domicile. Before recounting the further movements of these living shadows, and the result of their nocturnal mission, let us more particularly describe the location of the house which the man of diamonds had entered, and its peculiar surroundings.

The dwelling stood near the river. Indeed, its rear walls were but a few yards from the bank of the Mississippi. Directly under the room occupied by the man of diamonds, and upon the ground floor, was an apartment from which a window opened upon the rear. This window was small, and all that prevented entrance or exit through it was a heavy wire mosquito screen framed into the sash.

The man of diamonds, as we have stated, fell asleep, but scarcely had he become oblivious in slumber when he started up again, perfectly awakened, and with a nameless yet well-defined premonition of impending danger. The air of the room seemed cold and chilly, and it struck upon him like the breath of an open tomb. Securing a bowie-knife from the table and thrusting his No. 6 Smith & Wesson's forty-five calibre revolver into his pistol pocket, the man of diamonds crept to the window and peered out upon the bank of the river. The night was not so profoundly dark but that near objects could be distinguished, and their character determined. Commonly plain, therefore, he saw underneath the window and directly in front of the window upon the ground floor which we have mentioned, two men who appeared to be engaged in conversation. Without making any noise that could be detected by those without, the man of diamonds stole cautiously from his room, and made his way downstairs. Slipping he entered the room underneath his own, and crept to the open screen-protected window, where he saw the two men stand. Gradually, as he listened, and plainly overheard their conversation.

"That's the only way, Gill. We'll cross this river, then you go in, and deal to the man of diamonds. He'll give you the one, for we saw a letter there just after he went into the house. Good-bye, and the best with the sandwich, man. The man of diamonds will be out of the house by day. By day the lady will be dead in the house of the man, for the man is with. Come, and you'll see and one of the men."

"Yes," answered his companion, "I'll go inside

and do the job, but remember, I get an extra share of the reward."

Then followed the muffled sounds made by the removal of the fastening which secured the screen. With a grim smile upon his face the man of diamonds stole back to his room, and standing behind the door, which opened inward, he awaited, knife in hand, the coming of the assassin. He heard cautious steps upon the stairs. They came nearer and paused before the door. He could hear the suppressed breathing of a man without. Directly the door was pushed open for about an inch. Then there was another instant of silence. A moment later the door opened more. That was the last step he ever took upon this earth. The man of diamonds arose like a spirit behind him, and buried his heavy bowie-knife in his heart. The man made no sound save a smothered groan, as he sank to the floor in an inert heap.

Then began a strange proceeding. The stranger exchanged clothing with the dead man, who was somewhat of his size and build. This done, he removed the white hair and whiskers which he wore, and which were thus proved to be only a disguise, and hastily adjusted them upon the dead man; then, opening the window, he dropped the dead man out upon the ground below. Hardly had it struck the earth with a dull, sickening thud, when the man upon the watch underneath seized it and dragged it to the river bank. The next moment there was a heavy splash, and the man of diamonds knew that the confederate of the man who would have killed him thought that he had consigned the victim of his partner in crime to a watery grave.

Now came the most difficult part of the scheme which he had conceived. For its successful accomplishment the man of diamonds must go down and join the man below. He must impersonate the man Gill, whom he had slain. Drawing the dead man's slouch hat well down over his eyes, he descended, and passing through the window, joined the man who was impatiently awaiting him. In his hand he had a heavy purse and a large pocketbook which he had displayed in the gambling hell. Springing through the window, he gave both to the man on the outside, saying hurriedly:

"Run for your life. The house is aroused; I heard them moving. Take care of the plunder, and I'll meet you later and divide—I'm off."

"All right, Gill. The old place, remember," he said, running rapidly away in a direction opposite to that in which the man of diamonds had already started.

But the man of diamonds did not go far. Soon he returned to the house, replaced the screen in the window, and reaching his own room, removed all trace of the terrible scene which had been enacted there. This done, he again sought sleep, but at a very early hour he was upon the street, and the first thing he did was to repair to the shop of a theatrical wig-maker and secure a white wig and whiskers, precisely like those he had previously worn, and which he had placed upon the man called Gill.

The next afternoon, after his flight from the room of the man of diamonds, the companion of the slain

man, Gill, entered a saloon on the levee, and proceeding to an apartment in the rear he opened the pocketbook and heavy purse; a peculiar combination of circumstances had prevented his doing so before. The one was filled with pieces of newspaper, the other with stones, nails and bits of iron. The curses with which the man greeted this discovery were something terrible. He thought Gill had played a game upon him and made off with the whole of the plunder. While he was raving in anger the door opened and Le Grend entered. In answer to his questions the disappointed wretch told him all. "Gill has got off with all the plunder, confound him. If I ever set eyes on him again I'll cut his blamed black thievin' heart out, dash him," he concluded.

"But the man is out of the way—you are sure of that?"

"Yes, I pitched him into the river myself. He was stone dead when Gill threw him out of the window; I made sure of that."

"Well, that takes a weight off my mind; I believe that man was a secret enemy, and while I can afford to lose the forty thousand dollars I lost to him, I am glad he can trouble me no more. There was something about his eyes strangely familiar to me, though I never, to my knowledge, saw the man before."

"That's all right, cap, and now I'll trouble you for the thousand dollars you promised me for my share in the job."

"I expected to pay you out of what you took from the man of diamonds. That was understood, and as you have let Gill beat us out of all that you cannot expect me to pay you."

"Can't I—I should say I did. You pay me that thousand dollars, cap, or I'll send you after the man of diamonds," and as he spoke the man cocked a pistol, which he had suddenly drawn, and pressed it against Le Grand's temple.

"Well, since you insist," answered Le Grand, and drawing a check-book from his pocket he filled a blank and handed it to the other.

"Now look here," said the man as he took it. "Don't you try no game on me. Don't you stop payment of this, for if you do look out—you know Sol Darglers ain't the man to stand no such nonsense."

"You may rest assured upon that point. I shall not permit the check being paid; and now that our little difficulty is settled, join me in a drink, and let us part amicably," said Le Grand, arising and crossing to the door which opened into the saloon of the saloon, which was an "all-night" place.

Directly he opened the door he staggered back with an exclamation of terror. The other man, who had risen as Le Grand went toward the door, followed him, and with a look of fear. There in the open door stood the man of diamonds.

"Good-evening, gentlemen," he said, coolly.

CHAPTER VII. The Man of Diamonds Was.

The man, who the Thug with Isadora gained the boat behind the forest monarch, and pulled off upon the bayou, he walked rapidly away in the darkness. Disappointed in the attempt to

dash upon and overwhelm the escaping East Indian by the appearance of the Swamp Doctor, though they were, the outlaws were not disposed to see the victim whom they had felt so confident of securing thus slip through their clutches. Accordingly but very brief delay was made in attempting an attack upon the Swamp Doctor before the greater portion of the band hastened to the shore of the bayou, and, producing boats from places of concealment familiar only to themselves, they put off in pursuit of the fugitives. They hoped to overtake the Thug before he reached the mainland; for well the bandits of the swamp knew that did the escaping ones once succeed in reaching it the chances of their recapture would be materially lessened.

The outlaws were upon the point of giving over the chase as hopelessly lost, when from the boat of Agor, which was in the lead and nearer the swamp side of the bayou than any other, there came a pistol shot. At the sound of the detonation, the outlaws' boats all pulled in the direction of their leader. A pistol shot had been agreed upon as a signal for this purpose. Had Agor then discovered Thradradro and Isadora? All his followers thought so as they made the greatest speed toward his boat.

When Agor and the majority of the outlaws took to the boats, it must not be understood that none remained to confront, and, if possible, capture the Swamp Doctor; for a score or more still remained, and they were determined that he at least should not escape them. The Swamp Doctor fully realized all this, and yet he confronted the mob as cool as though standing before a company of friends. Speaking in a low, yet singularly clear and distinct voice, he said:

"I hold six lives in each of my hands. Twelve of your number must fall before you can capture me. Who among you all dare be the first to test my aim? Come, step forward, someone, I am anxious to begin."

Not one of the enemy moved. Every one of that band of desperate men knew that the Swamp Doctor made no idle boast. The negroes in the outlaw band were especially sure. Varcodoc knew that they were his friends. He was assured that were it in their power they would willingly favor his escape from the island. In a strange foreign tongue, which, from its outlandish and barbarous idiom and sound, no doubt belonged to the native populace of Central Africa, Varcodoc now addressed the negroes. Some answered the swamp physician, while others ran away from the place as though to execute some command of the Voodoo's giving. Soon the object of the negroes who had run away from their companions at the command of the Swamp Doctor was made clear even to the comprehension of the whites, for they appeared towing a boat toward the bank where stood the large tree, and which served as a point of protection for Varcodoc. The negroes were bringing a boat in which the Swamp Doctor could escape.

"Come on, boys, the doctor is here, and he's a good one. He's a doctor, and he's a good one. They are traitors! Down with them!" shouted Agor and Dan, and closely followed by the rest of his band he rushed toward the bank where stood the

negroes were propelling the boat. At the same time the Swamp Doctor bounded from the tree and also made a dash toward the boat. Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang! rang out his revolver, as he discharged six shots among the outlaws in such rapid succession that the detonation sounded like the rattle of musketry from a skirmish line. Like a whirlwind he dashed through the astonished outlaws, firing all the time. They fell back before him, and he passed them. In another moment he had reached the boat and his colored friends. The boat which he thus gained was a large one, capable of holding eight persons comfortably.

"Jump in, boys," cried the Swamp Doctor, as he leaped into the boat himself.

The seven negroes who were about the boat obeyed.

"Now pull off, all together, and row for your lives to the main land," was the Swamp Doctor's next order.

The negroes pulled with a will, and, thus impelled by their strong, muscular arms, the boat shot out into the bayou with great velocity. Onward through the darkness swiftly it swept. Suddenly upon the ears of its occupants burst the report of a pistol shot. It was the same which the followers of Agor had heard coming from the leader's boat, and which had caused them to row with all their might toward him.

"Pull, men! pull in the direction of that shot. Pull as you never pulled before! My friends are in danger, and the loss of a moment may cost them their lives!"

The boat fairly dashed through the water as the negroes strained upon the oars. The light from the torches in the boat of Agor, the deformed, now guided them, but they were still without the glare illuminated by them, and therefore as yet unseen by the outlaws. A few more vigorous strokes, and the boat of the Swamp Doctor shot out into the circle of light. When Agor's men saw the Swamp Doctor and his followers, they pulled for shore, and left their intended captives alone. The Swamp Doctor and his friends had returned to the lonely dwelling, and the Swamp Doctor told Le Grand all about his rescue of Marcus to life, and that he expected to see him at his place at any moment. Goodnight, then, the Congo, came in stealthily. In his hand he had a note, which he at once gave to Varcodoc. The note was read by him. Then came the reading of the report in his hand, and turning to the Congo, he suddenly asked:

"At what time does the New Orleans boat stop at the alluvial wharf?"

"As soon o' lock in de morning, sah."

"I say, at seven o'clock we will take passage for New Orleans—that is, you and I will, Isadora and Thradrado will remain here, to receive Marcus, and send him after us all soon as we arrive."

Le Grand then told the Swamp Doctor that he was going to remain for the time being, and that he did not question him regarding the matter. The Swamp Doctor then made a statement on the part of the swamp physician, that the next day Le Grand and Marcus would go to New Orleans by rail. It came from a spy at Bonville plantation, who

kept the swamp physician thoroughly informed regarding all that transpired there. Evidently the strange Swamp Doctor had good cause to desire to know all that went on there. That he had some scheme under way in which Le Grand was to play a part was also quite evident to all. The next morning Varcodoc, the "man witch," and Isadora departed for New Orleans by boat. Before his departure, however, the Swamp Doctor said to Thradrado: "If Marcus Bonville does not come here to-day, you must find out where he is. Seek old Bob, the darky coon-hunter, and do not rest until he is found. I have a sort of presentiment that he has fallen into trouble, and if so you must rescue him."

Thradrado promised to do so. Arriving in New Orleans, as they did, in safety, the Swamp Doctor's first move was to disguise himself in a white wig and whiskers. The man called "the man of diamonds," who so suddenly confronted Le Grand and his companion, at the close of the last chapter, with the salutation of "Good-evening, gentlemen," was none other than the Swamp Doctor.

CHAPTER VIII.—Thradrado's Quest.

The specified time which the Swamp Doctor had mentioned for the return of Marcus Bonville elapsed, and still the young man came not, therefore Thradrado, according to promise, began the search for the missing man. Thradrado, accompanied by Dragon, the bloodhound, set out for the hut of "old Bob," the darky coon-hunter. Fortunately he had advanced but a comparatively short distance on the way when he encountered the old darky, who, gun on shoulder, was leisurely strolling through the swamp. Most opportune was this meeting, for old Bob was the only person who could have given the slightest information regarding the object of Thradrado's search.

When Marcus left old Bob's hut the old darky, impressed with the idea that the youth was hardly in a condition to brave the dangers of the swamp, followed him, but at some distance in his rear, so that his presence was not even suspected by Marcus. Old Bob saw the phantom woman at the same time that Marcus observed her, and when the youth pursued her old Bob still continued to follow as rapidly as he could. The old darky saw Marcus enter the asylum, and he had never seen him come out again, although he had watched and waited about the place for hours. Thradrado, as the trusted right-hand man of the swamp physician, had no difficulty in obtaining all the information which the darky could give.

Intuitively Thradrado arrived at the conclusion that Marcus had fallen into the hands of foes. Intuitively, too, he felt that the youth must be detained within the mad-house against his will, and the thing to be accomplished was to rescue him. It could be accomplished. They secreted themselves in a clump of undergrowth, near the water-course, in which Marcus had gazed upon his own haggard face when he had crossed at the same point. Thradrado determined to remain in hiding until the darkness of the night should favor a close inspection of the place. After a while it was as dark as could be desired. Thradrado loosened

the dagger in his belt, and coiling the fatal cord of the stranglers upon his hip, he glided from the bushes and out into the Egyptian darkness of that southern night. Old Bob remained in the cover with his rifle across his knees, upon the alert for danger.

The East Indian glided forward until he arrived at the wall which encircled the grounds around the asylum. Here he paused, and stood for a moment gazing up at the windows of the building, from several of which the light streamed forth. As he remained thus he was suddenly startled by a hand falling upon his shoulder. He turned around as quickly as a lightning flash, with knife in hand, ready to defend himself to the death if need be. He confronted a woman. She was the phantom woman of the swamp. Before Thradrado could utter a word, the strange lady of the white mask said:

"You are the friend of Marcus Bonville?"

"I am," answered the East Indian, recovering from his surprise.

"You are in search of him now?" was the woman's second inquiry.

"Yes, I am trying to find him," answered the Thug, in his peculiar English.

"Do you know where he is?"

"I think yes. I think he there," and Thradrado indicated the mad-house.

"You are right; Marcus Bonville is there, and he is held a prisoner," answered the phantom woman.

"How you know? You see him?"

"Yes, I have seen him"

"Then you bring me so I see him."

"Listen," answered the woman. "Marcus is a prisoner, and I could not conduct you to him without undergoing great risk, but I will lead him out of his prison and bring him here."

"You do it?" queried Thradrado, doubtfully.

"Yes, I will do it."

"All right, then. But if so hard to bring me, how so easy bring him?"

"I will not explain now. But if you will wait here I think that before daybreak, yea, before midnight, I can open the cell in which Marcus is held, and bring him to you undiscovered."

"I wait. You bring," was the East Indian's laconic answer.

The Thug then returned to Bob and told him what they were to do, and what he had seen. We now follow the phantom woman of the swamp.

Upon leaving the East Indian, she proceeded directly to the rear door in the wall, the same through which Marcus had been admitted by Alexander, the watchman darky, and knocking upon it, she awaited the result like one who expected to be admitted. Almost directly the door opened, and Alexander, and the woman, who had been waiting in the dark, stepped out upon the porch.

"What the cat yah say, woman? You bring Marcus Bonville here? It am a good thing, dat Marcus Bonville come here to find some as he done, but dem am de prison, so I got mad to do but let her in an' out."

Then muttered Alexander as he watched the phantom woman still she disappeared in the house. The woman entered the kitchen, and from that apartment she went directly up to the second

story and from which opened the doors of the numbered cells of the "patients." Straight toward the cell in which Marcus Bonville was confined she made her way, pausing now and again to listen. No sound came to her ears. As yet all went well, and she was unobserved. The cell was reached. The phantom woman produced one of the keys with which she had provided herself, and was about to insert it in the lock when she heard a step behind her. Turning she came face to face with Alexander, the negro janitor of the mad-house.

"So I've cotched yah at last. I felt it in my bones dat you would be up to some deviltry one of dese fine days. You was gwine fur to let a patient out, wa'n't yah? Lucky I happened around. Now you come along o' me, and I'll just lock you up in yah own cell, and in de mornin' I'll tell Dr. Divolo about dis, and I reckon you won't git let out ob your cell no moah. You can't never depend none on crazy folks nohow; dat am a fac'. Come along now," and as he spoke the darky grasped the woman by the shoulder roughly.

It was a moment for prompt and desperate action.

CHAPTER IX.—Le Grand's Secret Foe At Work.

Le Grand and his companion were stricken dumb at the appearance of the man of diamonds whom the reader now knows is Vercure, the Swamp Doctor in disguise, and before they could recover from their consternation he had vanished again. The sleep of neither Le Grand nor his tool, the villain who had been the companion of the ill-fated "Gill," was not of the soundest or most desirable character that night. Visions in which a white-haired stranger figured as the leading feature haunted their pillows. As for the Swamp Doctor, he enjoyed the fright he had given them greatly. Next day was the great day at the meeting of the Southern Racing Association, for upon that occasion the fast horses displayed their speed. Since his acquisition of Bonville plantation Le Grand had become the owner of one of the fastest trotters, at that time, in the South. But Le Grand's horse lost the race that day, and also a lot of money for his owner. Madame Verges, who was at the races with him, and Le Grand were bitterly denouncing their luck when a white-haired, white-bearded man passed by him, and as Le Grand, with a half-stifled exclamation of terror and surprise, rose from his seat, the man gave vent to a mocking laugh, then vanished into the vast distance.

"The man of diamonds again! What does his presence here? His coming bodes me evil, I fear," muttered Le Grand.

Madame Verges, who was with him, looked truly at the point where the man of diamonds had disappeared. Notwithstanding which, she the part of the conversation to make her own. Le Grand remained silent and anxious, and he found himself alone in his private office. There, patient thoughts, the result of the fright he had received with Alexander, striving to find a way out of the painful entanglement which he found at the curiously and upon the mysterious and broad open field. Since a few hours, he was no

solution to the problem, no way of escaping the consequences of his losses save one.

"No, no," he muttered. "There is no other way—the diamond must be recovered. Why do I hesitate about it? The foolish fear that has taken hold upon my mind shall no longer restrain me. I'll risk the money on the gem, come what may."

The resolution once formed, Le Grand was the sort of man to harken upon its execution. That very day he instituted inquiries in a cautious manner regarding loan brokers and the various firms who advanced money upon jewels in the city of New Orleans.

* * * * *

In a residence, in the northern part of the city of New Orleans—to which the Swamp Doctor and Isadora had removed after the attempted assassination of the former at the private boarding-house upon the river—a peculiar scene was taking place upon the evening of the same day upon which occurred the incidents last narrated. In an elegantly furnished front room an aged Jew and a youth and handsome youth were apparently rehearsing a part; the old man striving to instruct the younger in the Hebrew dialect. A few hours later the same old Jew and the handsome youth might have been seen in an elegant pawnbroker's office on what was then Chattaras street. From the manner of both it would seem that they were expecting someone; that the coming of an expected person was looked upon as of the greatest importance was also evident to a close observer. For through an opening in the inside blind the youth kept a vigilant watch for the anxiously-awaited arrival. The old Jew sat at his desk behind the counter, drumming restlessly upon the table top. Suddenly the youth at the window uttered a warning exclamation, and, leaving the window, glided to the old man's side.

"He is coming at last," he said.

"Then go behind the curtain. He must find me alone."

A moment later the outer door opened and a man quickly entered. He was Captain Le Grand.

"You are Nathan Arnheim, the diamond broker, I presume?" said Le Grand.

"I am, at your service, sir," answered the aged Jew, coming forward. He spoke with a slight Hebrew dialect, but it was hardly apparent.

"Very well, I have here," and he produced a leather case, "an unusual diamond of wonderful size and beauty, upon which I desire to borrow the sum of \$100,000 in gold. The gem is worth much more, as you can see for yourself."

As he spoke Le Grand touched a spring, and the case flew open, disclosing a magnificent diamond—a brilliant, glowing mountain of light—seemingly a perfect gem. At sight of the wonderful object the old Jew started violently and stifled an exclamation of surprise. Le Grand looked at him quickly, and there was an expression of triumph upon his face. In that rapid glance Captain Le Grand caught the eye of the old Jew. He uttered an exclamation which was a grating cry, and made a quick grasp at the diamond-case which he had placed upon the counter before him. Quick as he was, the old Jew was still more rapid, for catching the object of Le Grand he snatched away the jewel-case. Le Grand uttered a howl of rage.

"Curse you, I know you now; you are the man of diamonds—my evil genius—the curse of my life. Give me back that diamond or I'll murder you, you devil in human form," he shrieked, rushing forward.

"Stand back!" cried the Jew, drawing a revolver like a flash from his bosom and aiming it full at the other's heart. "Advance but one single step, and I fire!" he said.

Le Grand paused. He knew death threatened him if he heeded not the Jew's admonition.

"This diamond is not your property," the Jew went on quietly. "It was stolen. I know the rightful owner, and I shall keep it and restore it to him. You will never get it again."

"Then, curse you, kill me!" yelled the maddened Le Grand, and he dashed at the Jew, heedless of the weapon that covered his heart. The Jew pulled the trigger, but there was no report. The weapon had failed at the time when it was most needed. The next moment the two men clinched, and a terrible struggle for life began. The aged Jew proved wonderfully active and powerful, and Le Grand found to his surprise, he had engaged in a battle with one who was physically his equal. When the struggle began the old Jew threw the case containing the diamond from him, and it rolled away under the curtain behind which the youth was concealed. For a few moments, which seemed longer than they really were, the two combatants appeared to be about equally matched, as neither gained any material advantage over the other; but finally it seemed that the tide was turning in favor of Le Grand. The old Jew's foot slipped, and he sank upon one knee. At the same time Le Grand released his right hand and dealt the old man a terrible blow upon the temple. With a moan he fell downward upon the floor. Springing to his feet, Le Grand rushed behind the curtain to regain possession of the lost diamond, and he came face to face with the handsome youth who was secreted there.

"Great Heavens! you here?" he exclaimed. "Isadora, what means this?"

Le Grand had penetrated her disguise at once.

"It means that we are on your trail to fight for right and justice. It means revenge," cried Isadora.

"Ha! I see it all. You are the friend of my secret foe; but he is powerless now, and you are at my mercy. Come, if you would save yourself, give me the diamond-case which the Jew hid behind the curtain. I know you secured it. Come, quickly, do my bidding, or it will be the worst for you."

Isadora strove to pull a pistol with which she was armed, but the villain was too quick for her, and before she could draw the weapon she was disarmed. Despite her struggles the watchful Isadora by the throat, and as his strong hands compressed her beautiful neck cruelly, "Speak," he hissed, "or I will strangle you to death."

"No, never will I speak as you wish!"

"Then die!" The vise closed upon her throat again, and death seemed inevitable.

Le Grand's face was that of a man as he bent over the girl whom he was cruelly strangling. Her eyes were staring, and her hands were

her face was purple, a moment more and his awful work would be accomplished. It seemed terrible that that fair girl must die thus. Was there no one to come to the rescue? Would not fate yet send deliverance? It seemed not, and yet at that instant, when all seemed lost, could Le Grand have glanced behind the curtain where he had left the Swamp Doctor insensible, he would have quickly released his victim.

When Alexander grasped the phantom woman's arm she drew a dagger and struck the darky. He fell immediately. She then seized hold of Marcus's hand and ordered him to follow her, saying that he was to be rescued from the mad-house. They gained the place where the phantom woman had left Old Bob and Thradradro and joined them. Then just as they were about to set out they looked back and perceived the asylum enveloped in a mass of flames. Marcus seized the East Indian's arm, and saying:

"Come, Thradradro, we must rescue Helen," dashed away, followed by the East Indian.

The Swamp Doctor had suddenly recovered from the blow he had received from the fist of Le Grand and he now sprang forward and dealt Le Grand a blow with the butt of his pistol which stretched the villain on the floor. Then he gave his attention to Isadora. As soon as she was cured they returned to their boarding house. Later on a stranger called, a detective named Harding. The Swamp Doctor received him.

"Mr. Varcodoc, the swamp physician, I believe," said the man, addressing the doctor.

"You are mistaken, sir, I am Mr. Fortunas, at your service."

"I am interested by Madame Verges to return Isadora Verges to her mother, Madame Verges."

"You cannot have her. Madame Verges is a fraud," said the swamp physician.

The detective left the house in a disgusted manner.

That night Isadora was walking in the street when she was set upon and carried to a cave, where after a short time she was rescued by Old Bob and Thradradro, but before they could take her away with them Le Grand suddenly appeared before them with a gang of cut-throats. Thradradro escaped with Isadora, but Old Bob was set upon by the villains, who rendered him insensible. Then they set out and overtook Thradradro and Isadora, made them captives and carried them back to the cave, where Le Grand ordered ropes tied about Old Bob's and the East Indian's necks and then hang them from some beams.

CHAPTER X. The Secret Lever in the Wall.

The ropes were placed around the necks of the helpless victims. The gang who hung them, and were about to draw them up. In another moment the wretched pair would have been hanged by the necks, when suddenly Thradradro sprang back and with a wrench which nearly dislocated his arm forced one of the ropes off the beam and around his neck he hoisted up the stout chains and seized hold of the iron ring which served as

a rope that was suspended from the ceiling. The next moment a torrent of water came pouring down through the roof with the noise of a cataract. The iron ring at the end of the rope served to turn a secret lever which let in the water from a lake situated directly over the cave. The East Indian had been informed of the existence of this secret lever by a member of the Secret Service Police, who had discovered it when searching for a den of counterfeiters in this very cave. As the water came rushing into the cave Le Grand started back, as did the rest of the gang, in terror.

"Perdition! He has found the secret lever! Stop! stop! for God's sake stay your hand. If you pull the lever further the whole torrent of the lake will come rushing in upon us, and drown us like rats!" cried Le Grand.

"If you do not pull the lever, I will hand you your weapons and let you all go," cried Le Grand in alarm. This was done and our friends departed.

They had not been long gone from the cave when Le Grand said:

"Come, boys, perhaps they may not escape us yet. I know a short cut to the surface. Come on, we may head them off yet."

Followed by the gang, he went through the secret passage.

Let us turn our attention to explaining how Thradradro and Old Bob, the coon-hunter, whom we left in the neighborhood of the mad-house, which, it will be remembered, was on fire, came so opportunely to the rescue of Isadora. It was a moment of great excitement. Helen Vonville was yet a prisoner in the burning asylum, and Marcus Bonville, followed by Thradradro, was rushing toward it to rescue her, while old Bob remained. Marcus Bonville and Thradradro reached the gate in the wall which surrounded the burning asylum, and it was wide open. All was excitement and confusion within the asylum yard; the servants were running in every direction, making little sensible or well-directed efforts to save either property or life. The patients, of whom there were a score or more, had been released from their cells, and the poor creatures, many of whom were no doubt really insane, were wandering about, confused and dazed by the excitement and tumult attendant upon their sudden liberation. Dr. Divolo was striving as best he could to bring order out of chaos, and save his more valuable possessions. But his feeble efforts and terrible oaths served only to further confuse the negro servants about him. Here and there Marcus and Thradradro searched the yard, hoping to discover Helen there, but she was not among the liberated.

"Can it be possible that those fiendish human forms have left Helen to perish in the flames?" exclaimed Marcus. "Come, Thradradro, I see the prime villain there," and he pointed at Dr. Divolo. "He shall speak the truth regarding my poor sister, or I will kill him."

The impetuous creole rushed upon Dr. Divolo, and before the "swamp doctor" realized what was coming, the rough seized him by the throat.

"Where is Helen Bonville? Have you not her a prisoner in the burning hall?" "Where is she?"

wretch, or, by the heavens above us, I'll throttle you!" shouted the infuriated youth.

"I gave orders that all patients should be released. If she is not among the prisoners in the yard she may have been forgotten; but, believe me, sir, I had no intention of leaving her to such a horrible fate."

Marcus read truth in the manner in which the mad doctor made this statement. Hurling the trembling man from him, Marcus rushed into the kitchen, followed by the East Indian. The fire raged all around them, but the stairs leading to the second floor, upon which the cell occupied by Helen Bonville was situated, remained open. Up these steps the two men leaped. At the top, reaching the door, they burst open the door at their head, which opened into the hall. The rent-up flames came rushing out, threatening to destroy our brave and venturesome friends. At the same moment there burst upon their ears the heartrending, despairing shriek of a woman. It was the voice of Helen Bonville.

Marcus tore an old garment, which hung upon a nail at the head of the stairs, from its place, and throwing it over his head, he prepared to dash through the sea of fire before him.

"Remain here, Thradrado; I will save her or perish in the fire," he cried, and the next moment he plunged through the fire into the burning hall.

The fire leaped all about him; the tongues of flame surged like fiery serpents upon him; his hair was burned, his hands blistered, but, undaunted, he reached Helen's cell and threw himself against it. At first the door would not yield; but again Marcus dashed against it with terrific force, and to his joy it gave way. The next moment Helen Bonville was in his arms, and he was bearing her through the fiery furnace toward life and safety. In all their future lives the terrible ordeal through which they passed during the next few moments was never forgotten by either. It all passed like some terrible dream; but at last Marcus reeled down the stairs with Helen in his arms, and but for the supporting arms of Thradrado he would have fallen down, dead on the spot.

Out in the open air both Helen and her preserver were quickly restored, and the party at once hastened to the bridge, where they found old Bob and his prisoner and the phantom lady of the swamp. They all at once set out for the home of the Swamp Doctor.

They arrived in New Orleans upon the evening that Isadora was abducted, and at once repaired to the quarters of the Swamp Doctor. The grief and disappointment of Marcus when he learned of Isadora's disappearance can better be imagined than described. The phantom lady also manifested the deepest interest in the fate of the missing girl. This seemed somewhat strange to the others, as the woman was an utter stranger to Isadora, and it only served to deepen the mystery which surrounded the phantom woman of the swamp. There were several clues to Isadora's disappearance, or at least seeming clues, and each of our friends set to work upon a different track. But Thradrado and old Bob, who had followed the same clue, came so opportunely to the rescue of Isadora.

Now the party of our story again leads us back

to them. It will be remembered we left them making their way through the passage which led from the cave to the surface of the earth, which the band of Le Grand was hastening by another passage to intercept them. This he succeeded in doing and the two brave defenders of the girl saw that they had another fight on their hands. Quick as a flash the old coon-hunter threw up his rifle and sent a bullet crashing through the heart of the foremost one of the gang.

Upon the same evening that witnessed Isadora's abduction by the emissaries of Le Grand and Madame Verges, Le Grand, after recovering from the blow given him by the Swamp Doctor, hastened to the office of a real estate speculator, and by means of a mortgage upon the Bonville plantation borrowed a large sum of ready money. As soon as Le Grand left the place the speculator was driven to the residence of the Swamp Doctor and handed him the mortgage. The doctor had given the real estate man the money for such a mortgage, as he knew Le Grand would try to raise money from the same. As Old Bob's shot sounded out while pursued by the gang of outlaws a light was perceived ahead of our friends, and who should suddenly join them but the Swamp Doctor and Marcus Bonville accompanied by a large party. Le Grand and his villains now beat a hasty retreat. The meeting of the lovers was most rapturous. It was decided to return to the residence of the Swamp Doctor. It was now that Thradrado was seen moving away in the direction taken by Le Grand accompanied by his dog.

"Le Grand will not escape the East Indian," said the Swamp Doctor.

The Thug was indeed a terrible Nemesis upon the trail of death.

CHAPTER XI.—Conclusion.

Our friends proceeded, as we have stated, to the home of the swamp physician in New Orleans. There, to their surprise, they found Madame Verges awaiting them. As soon as she saw Isadora she rushed forward with well-feigned solicitation, and would have embraced her, had not the maiden gently, but firmly, put her away from her. Isadora was astonished at this sudden exhibition of affection upon the part of this woman, who, though claiming to be her mother, had never manifested maternal love for the child whom she had forced to call her mother. In all the years which she had spent with Madame Verges, Isadora could not recall one single caress or loving word that she had received from this cold, stern, heartless Frenchwoman.

"How I loved!" exclaimed the Frenchwoman, "my child, you are dead. You repulse your own mother. The mother who has cherished you in her bosom. But you are unnatural!"

"No, I am not," answered Isadora, while all the spectators watched the strange scene with deep interest. "I do not believe you are my mother. You have never treated me with a mother's love, and although I cannot prove it, I feel a strange assurance that you are my enemy, and like a snake there sometimes comes

to my mind, shadowy and indistinct, the sweet, beautiful face of a woman who bent over and caressed me in the long, long ago, when I must have been but an infant. That woman was my mother. Intuitively, I know—feel it, and you are not!"

"Yes," said the Frenchwoman again. "You are my daughter, and you cannot escape me!"

"It is false, you are an impostor, and I denounce you!" cried the voice of a woman, and the lady with the white mask, who has also been called the phantom woman of the swamp, and who has been surrounded with so much mystery, suddenly entered the room and confronted Madame Verges.

The Frenchwoman, at sight of her, reeled back as though she were looking upon an accusing spirit.

"Who are you?" she demanded, turning fiercely upon the phantom woman of the swamp.

"Agnes Roland! and I am the mother of this innocent girl whom you have so terribly wronged. Isadora, my daughter, look upon the face of your own mother!"

As she spoke, the phantom woman removed the white mask from her face, disclosing the pale features of a lovely woman, who strikingly resembled she whom she claimed as her child.

"My mother! Oh, my mother! At last I have found you!" she cried, and the next moment the reunited parent and child were locked in each other's arms.

With a bitter meditation Madame Verges fled from the house. Grief caused her to fly, though none pursued. The Swamp Doctor would have detained her, but the mother of Isadora said:

"Let her go! She will find her own punishment."

Then in a few words Mrs. Roland explained how Madame Verges, who was a distant relative, had stolen Isadora when an infant. How she had been frantic at the loss, and how, while in this state, through Madame Verges, she had been sent to Dr. Divolo's asylum for the insane. The cause of all this devilish plot was money. Madame Verges thus gained possession of Mrs. Roland's estate. Thus was the mystery of the phantom lady solved. She had long been near, and unknown to her, watched over her daughter.

As Madame Verges left the home of the French doctor, Helen Bonville entered it. Helen had come to New Orleans with Marcus and the others, and had been so completely prostrated from the excitement and danger through which she had passed, that upon leaving the railway station Marcus had deemed it advisable to at once remove her to a quiet home-like resort where she could be perfectly at rest, and thus the better recover from the nervous prostration of which she was a victim. Thus it was that she had not gone with the others directly to the home of the Swamp physician.

Now, as she entered the room in which all our friends were assembled, she for the first time looked upon the face of him whom we have so long known as "Varcodoc, the Swamp Doctor." Like one who could not gaze upon him for a moment. Then, with a glad cry of "My husband! My husband!" she fell forward into his

arms, and as he pressed her to his heart, and kissed her again and again, he murmured:

"At last, my darling—my wife!"

Marcus recognized his long-lost brother, Ricard, whom he had supposed to have been slain by Le Grand or his emissaries. The creole brothers' reunion was most affecting. But after a time, when the excitement of recognition and greeting had somewhat subsided, the so-called Swamp Doctor said:

"Yes, my friends, I am Ricard Bonville, and as you see, I escaped the emissaries of Le Grand, although they believed they killed me as they did my poor father. I swore to be revenged upon Le Grand, and assuming the character which I have played so successfully I took up my residence in the swamp to be near the Bonville plantation."

The reader will remember that Marcus had said his brother had traveled for a long time in India, and it was there he obtained the knowledge of the strange drugs which he had used so successfully as the Swamp Doctor. A delightful evening was spent by the reunited family, and early the next morning Thradradro, the East Indian, and Dragon, the bloodhound, returned.

Could Varcodoc have followed the Thug, when with the bloodhound he started upon the trail of Le Grand, he would that same night have gazed upon this dreadful scene:

In the dark underground passage a man stands at bay, while through the darkness, with gleaming eyes and blood-curdling bray, comes the terrible man-hunting bloodhound upon his trail. A few moments later the savage beast discovers the man whom he is hunting, and the next instant leaps upon him. The man tries to use his knife, but the terrible fangs of the beast sink deeper and deeper into his breast, and he cannot do so. Then through the darkness glides the figure of a strange half-naked man. Upon his hip is coiled the fatal cord of the Indian stranglers. There is a moment's pause, and then the cord encircles the neck of the doomed wretch, and is drawn tightly until the man of crime who killed the father of the creole brothers, Marcus and Ricard Bonville, and who murdered the Thug's father in India, is stone dead. Yes, thus terribly perished Captain Le Grand.

The mysterious disappearance of Captain Le Grand was never satisfactorily accounted for. Only Thradradro and Ricard Bonville held the East Indian's secret. Marcus Bonville and Isadora in due time became man and wife, and, with Ricard and Helen, resided at Bonville plantation, and into the lives of the creole brothers came more happiness than usually falls to the lot of mortals. After the terrible trials through which they had both passed, the peaceful life which was now theirs and most acceptable. Madame Verges was never heard of more. It was presumed, however, that she had returned to France when she failed to find the man whose mistress she had so long been. Thradradro also returned to his native land.

Next week's issue will contain "THE RIVAL ROADS; or, FROM ENGINEER TO PRESIDENT."

CURRENT NEWS

EX-PRESIDENT WILSON'S RADIO SET

Ex-President Wilson's private radio set is back in commission, following its collapse in the middle of the League of Nations speech delivered by Lord Robert Cecil in New York. Mr. Wilson was listening attentively to Lord Robert's words when his receiving apparatus went dead, cutting off the last half of the address. Mr. Wilson recently acquired his radio outfit to keep in closer touch with the events of the day. There is also a radio set at the White House, which Mr. Harding frequently listens in on.

JAIL FOR SALE

If anyone wants to buy a county jail he can find what he is looking for by applying to County Judge James M. Simpson of Sharp County, Ark. The Court has authorized Judge Simpson to sell the old jail and lot at Evening Shade, and to accept \$200. This is an old frame jail, built many years ago, and in the early days held some noted criminals. For the past twenty years it has seldom had an occupant. The state of repair of the structure and its filthy condition inside has caused many Grand Juries to condemn the place as unfit for the confinement of human beings.

HOW MUCH NICOTINE IS THERE IN YOUR TOBACCO?

Some very interesting tests, says the *Scientific American*, have been made to determine which smoke contains the most nicotine. Long glass tubes, in one end of which the cigar, cigarette and pipe are inserted, the other end being connected with an exhaust pump, are used in the test. The nicotine is absorbed in filter paper. These tests showed conclusively that cigarette smoke contained the least amount of nicotine. For example, Virginia cigarettes, containing 1.40 per cent. nicotine, gave a smoke containing only 0.12 per cent. nicotine. Turkish cigarettes, containing 1.38 per cent. nicotine, gave a smoke with only 0.51 per cent. nicotine. Egyptian cigarettes with 1.74 per cent. of alkaloid yielded a smoke with just 0.21 per cent. of nicotine.

A Havana cigar, containing only 0.64 per cent. nicotine, yielded a smoke with 0.20 per cent. of the alkaloid. Tobacco, smoked in the pipe, containing 2.85 per cent. of nicotine, yielded a smoke containing 2.20 per cent. of nicotine. Porto Rico Shag tobacco, containing 0.33 per cent. nicotine, gives a smoke containing 0.25 per cent. of nicotine in the pipe.

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The Vanishing Of Val Vane

— Or, —

THE TROUBLES OF A BOY MILLIONAIRE

By WILLIAM WADE

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XVI.—(Continued).

It seemed strange to him that he did not know, and he resolved to fully post himself about his great estate at the earliest opportunity.

Looking behind him for his conductor now Val discovered that he had vanished, so he sat down on a rock to wait.

It was some time before any one came, but at last footsteps were heard and as they drew nearer Val knew that several persons must be coming. One walked in a peculiar hesitating fashion which was explained when a group of four men appeared. One carried a lantern; the one next to him was feeling his way with a stick. It was the blind prophet of the mountain, Father John. With him was the man Alfred, but Val's conductor had not returned.

The boy rose to greet them.

"Here he is, Father John!" exclaimed Alfred, as they drew near.

"Yes, yes, I know," muttered the blind man.

"And the wonder is how you know," remarked Alfred. "But for you this boy would now be dead. Do you hear what I am saying, Val Dane?"

"Yes, I hear," replied Val. "I am very grateful to you all, I am sure."

They were certainly a wild-looking lot.

One man wore long, black curls which lay over his shoulders. Another had a hideous scar across his cheek as if at some time he had been slashed with a knife.

All save the blind man stared at Val as if he was some new species of wild animal.

"Give me your hand, boy," said Father John, extending his own, and when Val took his hand the old man held on in silence for several minutes.

"It is well," he said, at last. "He goes to the camp."

"Is that well, Father John?" asked Alfred doubtfully.

"Question me not!" cried the prophet, striking the ground with his stick. "He not only goes, but there he stays until I get further information. At the least it will show him how we poor people are forced to live since Ralph Dubey drove us from our homes."

"Are we to go now?"

"Yes."

"And you, Father John?"

"I remain here."

"Come, Mr. Vane," said Alfred, and then the blind prophet released the boy's hand.

"Before I leave you, Father John, I want to say a word," ventured Val.

"Say it," replied the blind man.

"It is my firm intention to get in close touch with you people just as quickly as I can and to do all I can to better your condition. You shall be restored to your houses and they shall be made better than they are now. You shall be paid better wages. You——"

The blind man interrupted with a sharp gesture.

"Boy!" he exclaimed. "I believe you to be in earnest. I believe that in the end you will make good, but nothing can be done while Ralph Dubey lives. His day is nearly over. Death will soon claim him. Then and not until then you will be safe. Meanwhile you will do well to consider your own safety, for it is in your cousin's black heart to kill you. Take him away."

Val now followed Alfred and his companions back into the cave.

Then soon turned off to the right and a short walk brought them to another entrance which led out into a great dish-shaped hollow.

Here there was a large clearing and many tents, some of large size.

Women were engaged in washing and cooking. Half naked children were playing about. Several dogs came rushing up to them and barked until checked by the men.

"This is where you are to remain for a few days, Mr. Vane," said Alfred. "You will have a tent to yourself and the women folks will give you the best they've got, which is little enough."

"Am I to consider myself a prisoner?" demanded Val.

"No," was the reply. "Not in any sense. You may start back to Cross Creek this instant if you choose and I will send a man along to guide you, but in that case no further attempt will be made to help you. We swear by Father John. He has told you what you ought to do. It is up to you."

"I'll stay," replied Val. "The only thing is I have no money; to reward you for your kindness will be——"

"Enough! We have no money, either," broke in Alfred. "We have long since learned how to do without it."

Val was then shown to a small tent and was told that it was at his disposal.

And at this camp of miners for several days the young millionaire made his home.

Little was said to him, and he was not interfered with in any way.

Val tried his best to make himself both useful and agreeable, but it was almost no use.

Both men and women seemed shy of him; it was only the children who were willing to talk.

Especially was this true with all that concerned the strike, but Val learned enough to convince him that these simple people had been treated with great injustice for many years, and he grew still more determined to right their wrongs as soon as it lay in his power.

Of Alfred he saw nothing. This man, whose last name he learned was McCutcheon, did not live in this camp, it seemed, nor did Father John.

But the thing which impressed Val most of all was the extreme poverty of these people. It seemed to him that rather than live as they lived he would be willing to go to work on any farm.

(To be continued.)

HERE AND THERE

FRESH AFRICAN FRUIT IS CHEAP IN LONDON

South African fruit is being increasingly used in England. Whereas in 1910 only 180,000 boxes came to England, the arrival at Southampton last year totaled 1,125,000 boxes. These were distributed to London and the leading provincial towns. Supplies are coming in freely this year, and it is possible to buy fresh African plums and peaches here at moderate prices.

FOX GOES 200 MILES AND BEARS PUPPIES

A female silver fox broke out of a fox farm at Pulaski, Wis., and seven days later the manager, John Macikalski, received a letter from William Nahmais, Odanah, Wis., that the fox he sold the farm seven months ago had returned to his home, 200 miles away. This distance was covered by the fox in five days, and upon its arrival at Odanah gave birth to four puppies.

NEEDLES CAN FORETELL SEX

Prof. Julian Huxley's theories of sex predetermination are nothing new to Scottish farmers' wives, who claim an infallible method of learning which eggs will produce cockerels and which hens. Their method is this:

Take a threaded needle and string an ordinary cork—corks are plentiful in Scotland—about half way between the needle and a knot in the other end of the thread. Holding the egg in the left hand, suspend the needle and cork, held by the knot in the right hand, over but not touching the egg.

If the needle moves peculiarly, to and fro, the egg will hatch a cockerel; if it oscillates with a circular motion, the egg will hatch a hen; if the needle doesn't move, the egg is infertile.

BUILDING MATERIAL FROM CORN COBS

It is estimated that there are about 20,000,000 tons of corn cobs produced annually in America. Up to very recently this material has been entirely wasted, but recent experiments have shown that there are many useful purposes to which these waste products can be put. The latest use, according to the *Scientific American*, is in the manufacture of a lumber substitute.

The process consists in grinding up the corn cobs, adding the ground material with water until saturated, and then cooking in a closed vessel at a temperature ranging between 120 and 160 degrees Cent. for from thirty minutes to two hours. The resulting mass is then pressed to remove the liquor. The colloidal matter present in the corn cobs is dissolved out in this way and after the water has been evaporated a useful adhesive is obtained. The fibrous material obtained above is then mixed with a suitable binder and pressed into forms in molds or rolled into sheets.

GLUTTONOUS HABITS OF THE BALD EAGLE

After spawning, and sometimes while trying to reach the spawning spot, the Pacific Coast salmon die and are washed up on the shores, where they become the food for many kinds of fish-eating birds. The bald eagle is the most gluttonous. Some salmon are very large, weighing close to thirty pounds, often more, and when a bald eagle finds such an amount of food lying on the beach its simple mind seems to tell the bird to consume the entire fish at that one eating time.

In late autumn it is often possible to see a large bald eagle hopping along the beach or river banks, unable to fly because of his over-gorged crop. The immense mass of fish in the craw prevents the use of the wings and the strongest flyer of all birds is forced to cower down among the mud and rocks until the heavy dinner can be assimilated. According to naturalists, eagles usually eat just what they require to sustain life, but there is something about the salmon of the North Pacific that induces them to stuff themselves.

Other species of eagles carry away to the crags all prey and eat it there in solitude and safety, but the tempting salmon is too inviting to the bald eagle who lunches just where he finds this very appetizing food.

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INTERESTING RADIO NEWS

STOPPING TUBE HOWLING

There is one way to reduce the annoying howls and noises coming through the receiving set. Line the set with tinfoil or copperfoil sticking it with shellac. Do not use paint or glue, as these are not good insulating agents. Ground the foil after it is in place.

If the sheet tinfoil cannot be obtained in any store it may be procured from cigarette packages to serve the same purpose. Also place aluminum sheets between the vacuum tubes and ground them the same as the tinfoil.

WHO RULES RADIO WAVES?

The first court fight over the freedom of the air radio will take place at the Livingston County Court House at Pontiac, near Joliet, at the April term.

Edward McWilliams, wealthy president of the State Bank of Dwight, last November was granted a temporary injunction restraining G. Wythe Bertram, eighteen, an amateur wireless operator at Dwight, from using his broadcasting station because it is alleged to have interfered with the receiving of radio telephone returns in the McWilliams home on election night.

NAMING THE RADIO

Few persons, even among the experts, know the derivation of the word "radio" as distinguished from the older generic term "wireless." Of course, radio is wireless in a sense, but the latter applies to so many other forms of free communication that it was found necessary to seek a new word that would express more exactly the peculiar activity of the broadcasting stations as we know them to-day.

Radio applies specifically to electric communication by means of ether waves. There are many other forms. Electric discharges may be conducted through water or the earth. They may be conducted through light waves, just as ether waves are employed for a similar purpose. Even induction between wires strung short distances apart has been used by telegraph companies. Telegraphic communication has been established between free moving trains and the telegraph wires strung along the sides of the road by the simple expedient of laying metal strips on the roof of the cars. And successful experiments have been conducted between balloons equipped with a covering of tinfoil. All these may be called by the name of wireless. So may radio, but it is a thing apart.

RADIO RANGE

Everybody has wondered of wide range. In fact, one of the first questions asked by the novice when he is looking over outfits is, "How great a distance can this radio pick up voices?" Of course, it all depends upon conditions.

It can be compared to the effect one obtains when standing at the shore of a pond and toss-

ing a stone into the water. A circle of waves will start about the place where the stone dropped. If the pond is large enough there will be no waves perceptible at the edge. That is what happens when radio waves are broadcasted.

This is much the same as in the situation of a receiving set, but with this important difference: The distance that a receiving set will receive audibly will depend on the receiving set. A concert may be quite audible on one set and on another may not be heard at all. This has frequently occurred.

A part of this difference may be due to different hookups, the degree of amplification employed and the sensitivity of the phones. A great deal of difference may be found in the batteries employed in supplying current to the set. Owing to the importance of the batteries there is one type especially made for the purpose called the "B" battery. An automobile battery cannot be used with the best of results with every set.

RADIO ON STREET CARS

Radio, in the form of carrier current, was used successfully for the first time recently in carrying on a conversation between a moving street car and a power station, when the General Electric Company gave a public demonstration on the Third Avenue Railway lines.

As the trolley car slowly traveled up and down St. Ann's avenue, persons on the car talked back and forth to an engineer in the Brook avenue sub-station. At times the car was three miles from the station. General Electric engineers declared sets could be built of sufficient power to assure communications over an entire street railway system.

Radio transmitting and receiving apparatus similar to that used for broadcasting, was installed in both the trolley car and at the power station. Since each set was operated on a different wave length, or frequency, it was possible to carry on a two-way conversation simultaneously, just the same as over a land telephone. Persons who listened to the tests declare the voice was as clear and distinct as any over a regular telephone.

Carrier current differs from radio in that its signals, or the voice is not broadcast in all directions. The voice follows the trolley wire and does not radiate enough so that any one along the line can pick it up.

The Third Avenue Railway asked for tests to establish a means of communication between a repair wagon and the main office. The apparatus which was used in the tests could be installed just as readily on a repair or emergency wagon. Conversations can be carried on under any conditions, whether there is power on the trolley wire or not, since the energy used for carried current is supplied from storage batteries operating a motor generator set.

Other advantages of this system is that conversations are not interfered with by static or fading of signals, so prevalent in the ordinary

broadcasting. Government licenses are not required and licensed radio operators are not required to operate a set, since the system is entirely private.

Walter J. Quinn, electrical engineer of the Third Avenue Railway, in discussing the experiments, said:

"Operating delays usually occur through unforeseen causes, such as fires, accidents, or traffic congestion. Even with the best telephone service time is lost in reaching emergency crews and other employees who are charged with the duty of maintaining schedules and clearing up trouble.

"Where such employees are beyond reach of immediate telephone facilities additional time is required to despatch messengers for them. To improve this condition it seemed most logical to use the trolley wires and feeders of the system as a channel for the broadcasting of signals and with this in mind we asked the General Electric Company to make experiments which terminated to-day with the public demonstration."

RADIO WAVES

"How far is Paris—London—Berlin?"

"The man in the street and the geography class answer in miles to-day," says a bulletin issued from the Washington, D. C., headquarters of the National Geographic Society, "but in a year or even a few months the answers may come in quarter-turns of a little black knob.

"For radio is affecting geography as it is affecting many other fields. If you can hear voices and music and perhaps even the hum of traffic in the streets of a distant city, that city must straightway lose much of its remoteness." The bulletin continues:

Even to-day, when radio telephony is in its infancy and radio telegraphy is merely a slightly older brother, our own country seems to be shrinking rapidly, and nations seem to be gravitating closer together. It is as though Europe and America, and presently the other continents, were being towed toward one another by tightening hawsers of ether waves. The capstan points for these ethereal cables—the great radio telegraph stations—take on a new geographic interest.

Wave lengths are not an infallible index to the power of a radio station nor to its sending range, but they are at least a fair guide. The station which of all time in the world now regularly uses the longest waves—20,000 meters, or approximately 12½ miles—is near Paris, France. It is the Lafayette Station, built by the United States Navy to facilitate America's part in the World War, and since sold to France. This station, which until recently was unchallenged as the world's most powerful station, sends its telegraphic messages with ease—and practically instantaneously, of course—over the 4,000 miles of water and land that separate Bordeaux from Washington; and it has been found occasionally in French Indo-China, 6,000 miles to the east.

Lafayette's title to first place is now challenged by a commercial station recently opened on Long Island, which, if it is not yet more powerful, will be when additional waves are added.

This station sends on the second longest wave in use, 19,000 meters, or nearly twelve miles, and is employed for transmitting messages to Germany, about 5,000 miles away.

Although the United States Navy's station at Annapolis, Md., is assigned a wave of 17,145 meters (roughly 10½ miles), the third longest in use, it is easily one of the world's most powerful stations. For that matter, so is the navy station at Cavite, Philippine Islands, operating on 13,000 meters. The navy depends on the Annapolis station—which is operated, incidentally, by remote control by means of keys in the Navy Building in Washington—to transmit messages day in and day out over a radius of about 5,500 miles. This range includes the extreme end of the Mediterranean Sea, and the same territory can also be reached from the opposite direction by the Philippine station.

The United States Navy has the most complete system of high power land stations for radio telegraphy of all naval establishments. Southward of the great Annapolis station it has among its larger units the sending plant at Cayey, Porto Rico, using a 10,510 meter wave, and another at Balboa, Canal Zone, sending an 10,100 metres. The eastern portion of the Pacific is covered from the continent by a station at San Diego, Cal., and another on Puget Sound. The former uses waves of 9,800 metres and the latter of 7,100. In the Hawaiian Islands the navy has two sending stations, one using 11,500 metres and the other 8,875. On Guam is a naval station which sends on 9,145 metres; and finally, in the Philippines is the 13,900-metre station which completes the navy's band of radio stations around the world. In practically no place where its ships are likely to cruise will they be out of range of dots and dashes from one or more of the navy's sending stations.

The British Navy does not maintain a system of land stations of its own, but uses those of the British Post Office. These postal stations practically encircle the earth, but they do so in much smaller "jumps" than those of the United States Navy, and therefore use less powerful stations.

Of the twelve longest wave stations which follow Annapolis, seven are in the United States or its territories. There are commercial stations at Barnegat, N. J., 16,800 metres; St. James, L. I., 16,465; Kohoku, Hawaiian Islands, 16,300, and Tuckerton, N. J., 15,900; the navy station at Caite, P. I., and commercial stations at New Brunswick, N. J., 13,600 metres, and Bolinas, Cal., 13,310 metres. The five foreign stations in this group are British stations at Leafeld, near Oxford, England, 15,500 metres, a Dutch station in Java, 15,000 metres; a Japanese station at Iwaki, 15,000 metres, and a French station at Nantes, France, 13,800 metres.

There are only seven other important long-distance stations using waves of 11,000 metres or more. They are Abu Babul, near Cairo, Egypt, 13,000 metres; Nauen, Germany, 12,000; Lyons, France, 12,500; Stavanger, Norway, 12,000; Marion, Mass., 11,000; a station on the West Coast of India, 11,200, and Rome, 11,000.

The United States Army has numerous sending stations of its own and many maintained over the United States, which operate on wave lengths from a few hundred to 1,000 metres.

PLUCK AND LUCK

NEW YORK, MAY 16, 1923

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

DWARFS HAVE CHESTS LIKE GIANTS

On the high Andean plateau in Bolivia live dwarfs with the chests of giants. These men are Bolivian Indians and living as they do at a height of 12,000 to 14,000 feet above sea level, they have developed immense lung power to enable them to breathe properly in the rarefied air of these regions.

RUBBERSEED OIL

A report has been made by the Agricultural Department of the Federated Malay States on the oil from the seeds of rubber trees as a substitute for linseed oil. The oil is said to be of high quality, to require but little refining, and to come from a waste product that is available in great quantity and that is easy to collect.

Experiments with a consignment of thirty tons of seeds sent to England resulted in a yield of \$250 a ton for the oil and \$40 a ton for the residual cake. Linseed oil at that time was selling for \$300 a ton.

WOODPECKERS RIDDLE FLAGSTAFF

A 150-foot flagstaff, made from a fir tree on the playground of the Ravenna Grade School, Seattle, Wash., had to be removed because woodpeckers riddled it with holes. It was observed that while the national colors were flying from the lofty pole the birds did not bother the trunk, but as soon as the janitor removed the colors woodpeckers came from nearby woods and worked at it. About 1000 feet up the wood was pecked out so much as to be discernible from the ground. When lowered the pole broke at this point first. It was believed dangerous to pupils on the playground.

A SAFE ENVELOPE

An envelope has been devised that mail thieves cannot tamper with undetected. There are two ways in which a "safe" envelope may be opened — one by forcing the flap open with a thin metal blade, and the other by inserting the envelope until the mailman is no longer visible to the flap. In

either case it is difficult for even the person to whom the letter is addressed to ascertain whether the envelope has been opened unless something has been extracted. The improved envelope differs from the ordinary kind only in having a sheet of tissue paper attached to the flap and extending down into the inside pocket. This sheet attaches itself to the surface of the envelope with the sealing of the letter and it is obvious that any attempt to force the flap would tear the tissue, in spite of the utmost caution, the torn tissue being plainly seen when the envelope was opened in the proper way. To detect any subjection to the steaming process the tissue is secured to the flap by a colored mucilage, which liquifies instantly when brought into the presence of the hot steam, daubing the inner and outer surfaces of the letter, until it plainly indicates the use of improper methods to ascertain the contents.

LAUGHS

"Who presents people at court, pop?" "In this country, my son, it is generally done by the grand jury."

Algy—You say she only partially returned your affections? Clarence—Yes, she returned all the love lettes, but retained all the jewelry.

"Who is that fellow across the street there, and what's he raving about? His arms and jaws are working like those of a Popocratic orator at a free silver convention." "Hush! That's Wadley. His folks are afraid he's losing his mind. Bought a high-grade bike the day before the cut."

Facetious Traveler (poking his head out of the window)—What place is this? Native (leaning against the depot)—Paradise, Kaintucky, suh. Facetious Traveler—It is, eh? Well, this is how far from where? Native—Half a mile from the distillery, suh.

Little 'Rastus came home from school one day and asked: "I say, paw, why does dey alus put D. C. after Washington?" "Why, chile," replied the old colored man, "I'se surprised at yer ignorance. Doun' yer know dat D. C. means dat Washington wuz de daddy ob his country?"

Once a genial comedian consulted an oculist about his eyes. His nose was small and he couldn't keep on the glasses with which the oculist was trying to fit him. "You need not wear to glasses, Mr. Blank," said the oculist. "Oh, yes, I am," replied the comedian, "but not so high up."

"I wish to say to my colleagues, my friends, my minister, 'that the pulpit is not responsible for the error of the printer or the printer for the error in the Sunday school book. The error is for the benefit of the archangel, the arch fiend. We will now sing hymn 100, 'To Err Is Human, to Purgive Divine.'"

NEWS FROM EVERYWHERE

- AN ARCTIC COLLEGE

The "farthest north" college in the United States is the latest one chartered, and it is located in Fairbanks, Alaska. Formerly, Alaskan students fitted for college or seeking a preparatory course, had to travel a long way, and an expensive one to reach even the nearest in the Western States.

The new institution is the Alaska Agricultural College and School of Mines, and has courses in agriculture, home economics, civil engineering, mining engineering and general science. It probably will be some time before it is overflowing with pupils, but there is a great field before it, and the need for which it was created is great as those who are now living will witness in their lifetime. It takes time, money, patience and an indomitable determination to conquer all obstacles to make a success of any enterprise.

TIDAL WAVE LIFTS SHIP OUT OF TRANQUIL SEA

A mountain of water that rose from a calm sea is described by Captain George G. Mitchell of the Nawasco liner Brush. The captain said that on the morning of March 20, while the Brush was fifty miles off the coast of Mexico, sailors saw a long unbroken black line on the sea. This line approached the Brush rapidly, until it was seen that it was a wall of water fully seventy feet high.

The ship was turned head-to for the onslaught and, Captain Mitchell said, when the mountain of water hit his vessel it seemed as though a great hand grasped the ship and elevated it into the air. There was not a breath of wind at the time. For six hours the log of the Brush showed the vessel wallowed in swells equal to those off Cape Horn. The ship was driven miles off her course.

ANIMAL AND PLANT LIFE AT THE TOP OF MT. EVEREST

Although the 1922 British expedition to Mount Everest failed in its principal aim, which was to reach the top of the highest mountain in the world, it did succeed in finding out a number of things of much interest to scientific men. These things are now being made known in various scientific journals.

Certain brave little plants, such as edelweiss, were found blossoming at a height of almost twenty thousand feet, says the Kansas City Star.

Wild animals and birds, such as mountain sheep, ravens and rock doves, unacquainted with human beings, showed no fear of them at all, being eating from the climbers' hands. These wild sheep, ravens and doves, together with weasels, foxes, marmots, rats, mice and conies, with a few other birds, were found at an altitude as high as twenty thousand feet and occasionally even a thousand or more feet higher. Condors were observed flying high above the mountain's

north summit, twenty-four thousand feet above the sea level, where the atmosphere was only a third as dense as at sea level.

Some naturalists have proposed the theory that life on the earth much have begun first on mountain summits, for these summits might be considered as the first parts of the earth to be cool enough for the existence of living things. Geologists point out, however, that many of our highest mountains were formed since those earlier geological epochs in the rocks of which plant and animal foods have been found.

BOY DELAYS TWO SHIPS

Two goldfish and a small boy delayed for a half hour the sailing of two steamers of the Furness-Bermuda Line for Bermuda with 700 passengers. Ten minutes before the Fort Hamilton and Fort St. George were scheduled to leave Henry F. Mellon of 248 Audubon avenue, New York, who had gone to the pier to see friends away, discovered that his 6-year-old son Thomas had disappeared.

A bystander recalled seeing a small boy going up the gangplank of the Fort St. George. Mellon sought out C. M. Armstrong, general passenger agent, who ordered both vessels, berthed on either side of the pier, to wait until a search could be made.

After most of the rooms offering an attraction for a small boy had been searched in vain, Chief Steward Brennan happened to think of two goldfish he had in his inner office. He peeked in, and there was Tommy holding one wiggling fish in one hand and trying to capture the other. He was unceremoniously whisked ashore and the vessels started their delayed voyage.

RAT GETS CHICKS

Frank W. Raysor, a merchant in St. Matthews, S. C., has a problem for a rodent expert to work out, and it runs something like this: "If a rat can kill, eat and annihilate completely seventy-five chickens within about two hours, how big is the rat and how many chickens would he eat in an eight-hour day with no interference?"

The other day Raysor had shipped to him from Sumter 100 little chicks. They were housed in a heavy pasteboard container, subdivided into four comfortable compartments, with twenty-five chicks to each compartment. While awaiting the afternoon train for St. Matthews a rat entered three of the compartments and destroyed seventy-five of the chicks.

The entrance was a neat piece of work and the inner entrance from one cell to the other were equally as neat. The rat eliminated the usual chaff from his pawning and seemed to tear the pasteboard in big circles, leaving a well formed and almost perfect circle. He does business in the modern way, prompted no doubt by the thought that since he was depriving Mr. Raysor of three-fourths of his fine chicks he would give him the trouble of sweeping out the trash.

PLUCK AND LUCK FROM ALL POINTS

GEESE AS FIELD HANDS

Geese as cotton field hands sounds unique, but Roy Godsey, field man of the Missouri State Board of Agriculture, tells how they come in handy. He says:

"It is a common saying among the cotton growers that you can tell the number of acres a farmer will have in cotton the next year by the number of geese around his door in the winter.

"As soon as the cotton is planted and the grass starts the geese are turned into the field and kept there until the cotton plants shade the ground. To raise good cotton it is necessary to keep the grass down and the geese will do this. They will not damage the crop in the least, because they will not eat the plants.

"After the plants have grown to a size that a goose cannot step over them, the entire flock is headed at one end and driven down the middle, a goose to a row, and they will stay on their own row eating the grass until they reach the end.

"One South Missouri cotton grower has farmed 2,500 acres in cotton and used as many as 5,000 geese to keep the fields clean of grass. From one to two geese an acre will keep the fields in good shape for a cotton crop."

COW CLIMBS STAIRS

A cow which apparently had been walking in a dream lumbered into the hallway of 472 Humboldt street, Brooklyn, N. Y., shortly before 1 o'clock the other morning and climbed the stairs to the second floor.

"The fellow who lay out late and then make a racket like this make me sick," muttered Henry Marino, drowsily, in bed on the second floor. "This prohibition is a terrible thing." He dozed off.

There was a heavy knock against the door. Marino blinked. Indignantly he pulled his blankets about him and closed his eyes. Another bang.

"Wait a minute," he muttered peevishly. "I'll be there, but you gotta wait until I get good and ready."

He opened the door and gazed into the darkness. A bulky form loomed there.

"Moo?" asked the shadowy figure, the word translated, meaning, "want any milk to-day?"

"Wow!" yelled Marino, dashing for the window and yelling for the police.

A moment later the Hubert street station got a call and managed to slide the cow out of the building. Later she was claimed by Bernstein & Bernstein, who operate a slaughter house at 272 Avenue C.

"POWDERED ALCOHOL" FOR AMERICANS

A process for manufacturing powdered alcohol has been discovered in France and a company has been formed with the object of making large quantities for export to the United States.

According to the inventor, one Marcel Robert,

the powder has only to be mixed with water to give liquid alcohol of any desired strength.

A few grains in the bottom of a glass, with hot water added, will, when it is cool, produce half a pint of diluted alcohol.

The powders are to be given various flavors by which the simple addition of water will, it is alleged, produce almost any known drink.

Flavors now announced include vermouth, Benedictine, Grand Marnier, Chartreuse and liqueur brandy. Later it is hoped to imitate to a fair degree of accuracy mixed drinks, including Martini and Manhattan cocktails.

What sounds like a bootlegger's dream may, however, be prevented from execution, at least as regards America, by action of United States prohibition enforcement officers. Robert declares that he has investigated and found that the introduction of these powders would not be against the law, because they are not intoxicating liquids.

"In fact," he declared, "it isn't absolutely necessary to mix the powders with water. You can eat them with bread and get the same kick."

For some reason, however, other French chemists are skeptical.

NEW YORK TO PEKING IN 56 HOURS

An air route between New York and Peking, China, has been organized which will make possible a trip by passenger airplane in sixty-five hours, Brigadier General William Mitchell, Assistant of the United States Army Air Service, told the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce recently. The cost, he said, would be about \$1,200 a passenger.

Speaking to the Aviation Committee of the chamber, General Mitchell said he had just organized the route and that the time was not far off when the trip would be made in four stops, the first in Winnipeg and the next in Nome, Alaska.

"There will be only twenty-one miles of water to cross up at the tip of Alaska," he added, "and the third stop will be near the Omur River in Siberia. You will be able to start from New York at 3 o'clock in the afternoon and land in Peking at 10 o'clock on the morning of the third day.

"We can guarantee speed, of course, and we can guarantee safety. A device will be attached to our new machine which will enable it to land under almost any conditions. We are able to carry detachable auxiliary gas tanks well out on the wings. This will give us plenty of power, and within a year we will have perfected a method of carrying spare engines attached to the same shaft.

"The service will present no more hazards than any other means of transportation, and we hope that there will be a reduction in rates as the experiments progress."

General Mitchell said that others must realize the value of having a landing place for airplanes within a short distance of their centers.

OLD BELL IRKED HIM

For more than twenty years John Quirk has sat in his single room and listened to the tiny church bell in the Holy Family Catholic Church ring for mass and peal for marriages.

And its tone and its tune began to wear on the nerves of Quirk, a lonely bachelor. Quirk, whose home is a ramshackle structure, illy furnished and illy kept, wears a rusty black suit, and his hair is a rusty gray. He doesn't look the part, but Quirk, it is alleged, is possessed of upward of \$100,000, and when the bell began to make him more nervous than usual there was, in his opinion, but one remedy. So Quirk bought the congregation of the Holy Family Catholic Church a new bell.

"Get the best bell you can get," was his only injunction to Father John Brady, and the new bell, bright and shiny and pitched to a sharp, weighing more than a ton and costing approximately \$1 a pound, was hoisted into place, after it had been blessed by Mgr. Weber of Salem, who was there expressly for the ceremony. Quirk paid the check of \$2,200 with a smile, and declared "that perhaps now he can rest easier and not be worried to death."

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MISCELLANEOUS

MOVIE FANS—Hope Hampton extends personal invitations to you to join her Club. Send 50c to Box 55, Worcester Center, Mass.

PERSONAL

ASTROLOGY—STARS TELL LIFE'S STORY. Send birthdate and dime for trial reading. Eddy, Westport St., 3927 Kenwood Suite 73, Kansas City, Mo.

AVIATOR, 25, worth \$22,000, wants to marry. A., Box 35, League, Toledo, Ohio.

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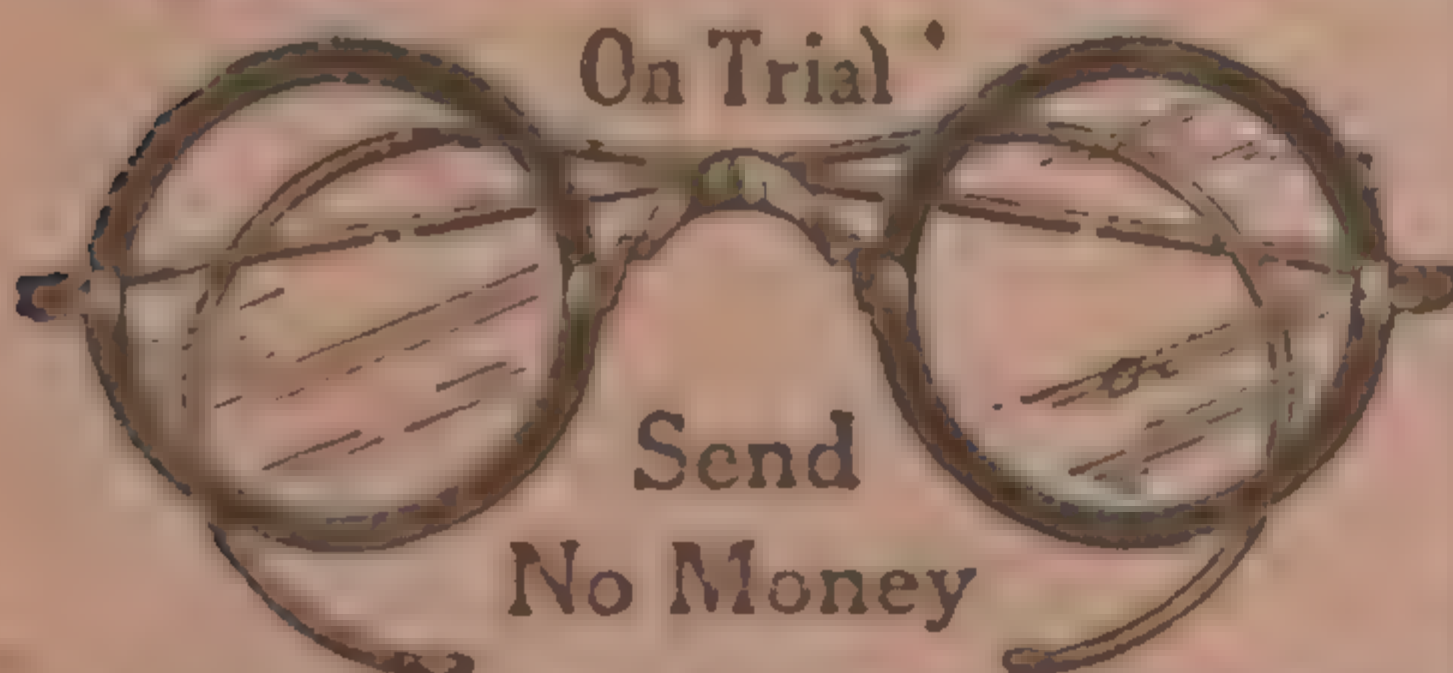
A NEW VEGETABLE

A new plant introduced into New York's school gardens this year is the dasheen. The United States Government received it from the West Indian Islands. After testing it it was believed that this plant would become a valuable addition to our food supply in different parts of the country. It grows extensively in the Southern States.

The plant grows to a height of four to six feet with luxuriant tropical leaves which are large and broad. These leaves are commonly called "elephant ears." The tubers form in a hill under the plant and they resemble potatoes. They may be boiled, baked or fried more quickly than potatoes. The dasheen is rich in protein and starch and have a very rich flavor between a potato and a chestnut. The flesh of the dasheen is firm and dry and they vary in color from cream to a grayish lavender when cooked.

This plant needs a rich, sandy soil in which the tubers are planted whole about three inches deep. They are ready to harvest about seven months after planting.

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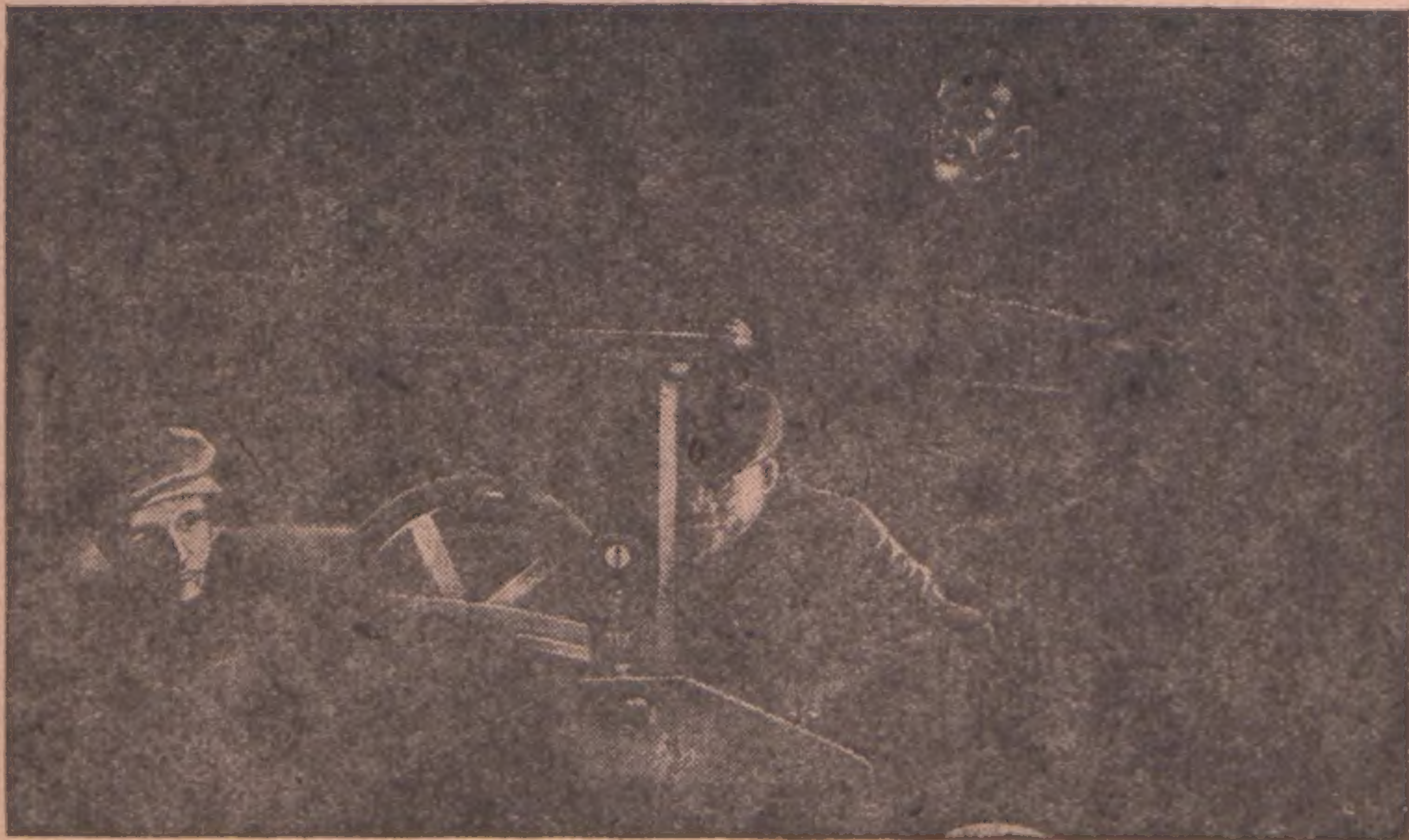
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